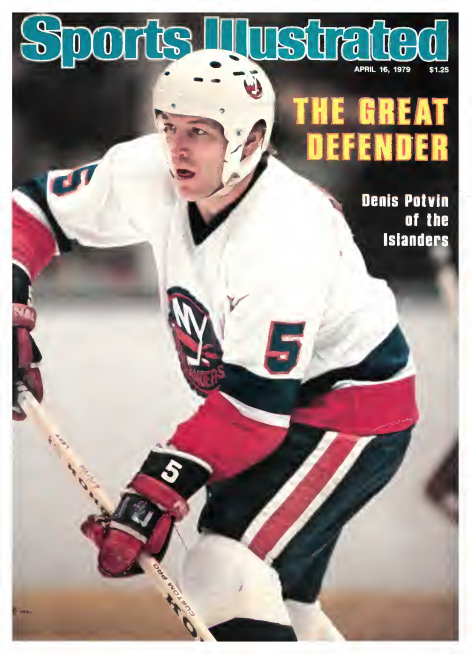


Sports Illustrated



APRIL 16, 1979

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THE GREAT DEFENDER

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Ford's Arizona Proving Ground

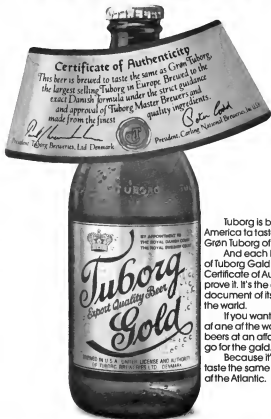
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LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER



MORRIS MEETS SPORTS BANQUET HIMSELF

"I know your boss, Keith Morris.

That's a line most of our writers in the field have heard, from athletes in almost every sport, about Keith Morris, 52, *SPORTS ILLUSTRATED's* Director of Publicity and Special Events. Although Keith is not even in the editorial end of the business, it is understandable why so many athletes feel he must run the show. Because of his omnipresence, he is probably known to more people in sports than anyone on the staff of the magazine.

Morris undoubtedly holds the world indoor record for attending the most sports breakfasts, luncheons, banquets and press conferences. In between interviews, he hustles around with his tape recorder, preparing his live weekly interviews with sports personalities that are heard on 134 radio stations across the nation and in many foreign countries, or in a television studio for a TV interview that will be aired by some 230 stations.

When not interviewing athletes, Morris is presenting them with awards and pictures: everyone who appears in *FACTS IS THE CROWD* receives a silver bowl, and cover subjects as well as many of those who have been featured inside the magazine, receive either a copy of the cover or a copy of a photograph or drawing that illustrated the article about them.

Another of Morris' responsibilities is staging sports festivals at which athletes put on demonstrations and clinics, and he is currently president of the Teach-down Club of New York, a nonprofit organization founded by John Heisman that provides scholarships for deserving high school athletes and raises funds for the Olympics and other amateur sports activities.

Perhaps his most time-consuming task is heading up our speakers' bureau, which, for a fee, supplies athletes to organizations for personal appearances. "We have more than 2,000 people from every area of sports on our speakers' list," says Morris. "Last year we had requests for them to appear at 1,500 functions. I never envisioned that the job was going to evolve into anything of this size."

Morris came to us in 1954 from the Time Inc. office in Philadelphia, where he was a zone manager in the circulation-promotion department, and 25 years later we continue to be impressed by the scope of his endeavors.

Morris credits his ability to get things done to his adherence to two rules: "I always try to keep my sense of humor," says Keith, whose trademarks are a rich laugh and a broad, unfailing smile, "and whatever I promise to do for people, I always do immediately. The toughest thing is that it's a seven-days-a-week job, because so much in sports happens at night and on weekends."

During his first 10 years at *SI*, Morris was on the road three-quarters of the time, he calculates, but now he gets a chance to relax at home in Ardley, N.Y., with his wife Lorna and son Keith Jr. The Morrises also have two married daughters, Mrs. Vicki Morse and Mrs. Glenda Jackson.

"The most gratifying thing has been all the friends I've made," Morris says.

And the fact that often I'm treated by the athletes as a friend, rather than as a business representative.

Keith F. Sullivan

Drinking bourbon vs. enjoying bourbon.

Why 30 minutes is a must.

Drinking doesn't require much thought.

You raise a glass to your lips. Then swallow.

That's terrific for water. But, certainly out of the question for Walker's DeLuxe Bourbon.

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And the more time you take, the more you enjoy it.

Walker's DeLuxe Bourbon. It's the difference between drinking bourbon and enjoying bourbon.



WALKER'S
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Vic Braden's new book will leave you laughing.

But the joke is on your opponents.



Vic Braden says "You can play tennis 500% better than you do now." And in **VIC BRADEN'S TENNIS FOR THE FUTURE** he shows you how. Vic's secret weapon—well-known to the millions who have seen him on TV—is his sense of humor. But the jokes aren't just for laughs. Vic's humor will relax you, jolt you out of your bad habits, and help to make each lesson absolutely unforgettable. Try these Braden one-liners on for size:

- If you're worried about your opponent's next shot while you're hitting your own, don't bother—because your shot isn't going over in the first place.
- The main goal in tennis is simple: Keep all your shots deep and in play, and you'll be famous by Friday.
- You can't hit a helium ball and attack—that's like throwing a hand grenade and running underneath it.
- When you are swinging in a northerly direction and the ball keeps heading south, you are very likely watching your opponent instead of the ball.
- If you can walk to the drinking fountain without falling over, you have the physical ability to play tennis well.

Vic Braden is the world's number one tennis coach.—Jack Kramer

Vic Braden's ideas are going to change the game of tennis from the ground up—and in **VIC BRADEN'S TENNIS FOR THE FUTURE** you'll learn how. You'll find out how Vic uses high-speed photography and special measuring devices at his Tennis College, in the world's first truly scientific study of tennis technique. You'll get the benefit of Vic's 22 years of successful coaching—plus his training as a psychologist—**VIC BRADEN'S TENNIS FOR THE FUTURE** is your key to a total revolution in tennis. A whole new approach.



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Hubie Smith, *Executive Director, Food & Agriculture*
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

¹ It goes down at the end of each trial (negative reinforcement) and comes back up (punishment) if the response is incorrect.

Our high-level procedure starts by solving a convex relaxation of the problem (1)–(3). For any thing we do, therefore, the input is a convex relaxation of the problem (1)–(3). In this paper, we consider the following relaxation of (1)–(3):

2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028, 2029, 2030, 2031, 2032, 2033, 2034, 2035, 2036, 2037, 2038, 2039, 2040, 2041, 2042, 2043, 2044, 2045, 2046, 2047, 2048, 2049, 2050, 2051, 2052, 2053, 2054, 2055, 2056, 2057, 2058, 2059, 2060, 2061, 2062, 2063, 2064, 2065, 2066, 2067, 2068, 2069, 2070, 2071, 2072, 2073, 2074, 2075, 2076, 2077, 2078, 2079, 2080, 2081, 2082, 2083, 2084, 2085, 2086, 2087, 2088, 2089, 2090, 2091, 2092, 2093, 2094, 2095, 2096, 2097, 2098, 2099, 2100, 2101, 2102, 2103, 2104, 2105, 2106, 2107, 2108, 2109, 2110, 2111, 2112, 2113, 2114, 2115, 2116, 2117, 2118, 2119, 2120, 2121, 2122, 2123, 2124, 2125, 2126, 2127, 2128, 2129, 2130, 2131, 2132, 2133, 2134, 2135, 2136, 2137, 2138, 2139, 2140, 2141, 2142, 2143, 2144, 2145, 2146, 2147, 2148, 2149, 2150, 2151, 2152, 2153, 2154, 2155, 2156, 2157, 2158, 2159, 2160, 2161, 2162, 2163, 2164, 2165, 2166, 2167, 2168, 2169, 2170, 2171, 2172, 2173, 2174, 2175, 2176, 2177, 2178, 2179, 2180, 2181, 2182, 2183, 2184, 2185, 2186, 2187, 2188, 2189, 2190, 2191, 2192, 2193, 2194, 2195, 2196, 2197, 2198, 2199, 2200, 2201, 2202, 2203, 2204, 2205, 2206, 2207, 2208, 2209, 2210, 2211, 2212, 2213, 2214, 2215, 2216, 2217, 2218, 2219, 2220, 2221, 2222, 2223, 2224, 2225, 2226, 2227, 2228, 2229, 2230, 2231, 2232, 2233, 2234, 2235, 2236, 2237, 2238, 2239, 2240, 2241, 2242, 2243, 2244, 2245, 2246, 2247, 2248, 2249, 2250, 2251, 2252, 2253, 2254, 2255, 2256, 2257, 2258, 2259, 2260, 2261, 2262, 2263, 2264, 2265, 2266, 2267, 2268, 2269, 2270, 2271, 2272, 2273, 2274, 2275, 2276, 2277, 2278, 2279, 2280, 2281, 2282, 2283, 2284, 2285, 2286, 2287, 2288, 2289, 2290, 2291, 2292, 2293, 2294, 2295, 2296, 2297, 2298, 2299, 2300, 2301, 2302, 2303, 2304, 2305, 2306, 2307, 2308, 2309, 2310, 2311, 2312, 2313, 2314, 2315, 2316, 2317, 2318, 2319, 2320, 2321, 2322, 2323, 2324, 2325, 2326, 2327, 2328, 2329, 2330, 2331, 2332, 2333, 2334, 2335, 2336, 2337, 2338, 2339, 2340, 2341, 2342, 2343, 2344, 2345, 2346, 2347, 2348, 2349, 2350, 2351, 2352, 2353, 2354, 2355, 2356, 2357, 2358, 2359, 2360, 2361, 2362, 2363, 2364, 2365, 2366, 2367, 2368, 2369, 2370, 2371, 2372, 2373, 2374, 2375, 2376, 2377, 2378, 2379, 2380, 2381, 2382, 2383, 2384, 2385, 2386, 2387, 2388, 2389, 2390, 2391, 2392, 2393, 2394, 2395, 2396, 2397, 2398, 2399, 2400, 2401, 2402, 2403, 2404, 2405, 2406, 2407, 2408, 2409, 2410, 2411, 2412, 2413, 2414, 2415, 2416, 2417, 2418, 2419, 2420, 2421, 2422, 2423, 2424, 2425, 2426, 2427, 2428, 2429, 2430, 2431, 2432, 2433, 2434, 2435, 2436, 2437, 2438, 2439, 2440, 2441, 2442, 2443, 2444, 2445, 2446, 2447, 2448, 2449, 2450, 2451, 2452, 2453, 2454, 2455, 2456, 2457, 2458, 2459, 2460, 2461, 2462, 2463, 2464, 2465, 2466, 2467, 2468, 2469, 2470, 2471, 2472, 2473, 2474, 2475, 2476, 2477, 2478, 2479, 2480, 2481, 2482, 2483, 2484, 2485, 2486, 2487, 2488, 2489, 2490, 2491, 2492, 2493, 2494, 2495, 2496, 2497, 2498, 2499, 2500, 2501, 2502, 2503, 2504, 2505, 2506, 2507, 2508, 2509, 2510, 2511, 2512, 2513, 2514, 2515, 2516, 2517, 2518, 2519, 2520, 2521, 2522, 2523, 2524, 2525, 2526, 2527, 2528, 2529, 2530, 2531, 2532, 2533, 2534, 2535, 2536, 2537, 2538, 2539, 2540, 2541, 2542, 2543, 2544, 2545, 2546, 2547, 2548, 2549, 2550, 2551, 2552, 2553, 2554, 2555, 2556, 2557, 2558, 2559, 2560, 2561, 2562, 2563, 2564, 2565, 2566, 2567, 2568, 2569, 2570, 2571, 2572, 2573, 2574, 2575, 2576, 2577, 2578, 2579, 2580, 2581, 2582, 2583, 2584, 2585, 2586, 2587, 2588, 2589, 2590, 2591, 2592, 2593, 2594, 2595, 2596, 2597, 2598, 2599, 2600, 2601, 2602, 2603, 2604, 2605, 2606, 2607, 2608, 2609, 2610, 2611, 2612, 2613, 2614, 2615, 2616, 2617, 2618, 2619, 2620, 2621, 2622, 2623, 2624, 2625, 2626, 2627, 2628, 2629, 2630, 2631, 2632, 2633, 2634, 2635, 2636, 2637, 2638, 2639, 2640, 2641, 2642, 2643, 2644, 2645, 2646, 2647, 2648, 2649, 2650, 2651, 2652, 2653, 2654, 2655, 2656, 2657, 2658, 2659, 2660, 2661, 2662, 2663, 2664, 2665, 2666, 2667, 2668, 2669, 2670, 2671, 2672, 2673, 2674, 2675, 2676, 2677, 2678, 2679, 2680, 2681, 2682, 2683, 2684, 26

When the gas is the only thing that's being compressed, the work done is

CONCORD HOTEL GOLF SCHOOL

"Danny D" is still figuring the score and looking for an edge in a world of perfidy, affecting disguises, playing dumb and shooting smart, a chameleon fitting into the background with a makeup kit filled with jars of deceit and trickery. . . . But he is 42 years old and does not know if he will be a winner or a loser tomorrow—and he realizes that he must go on making his way in the shadows, as unobtrusively as possible, never really showing himself. On the rare occasions when he does, Danny D is a kitchen insect caught in sudden light, skittering away, hoping that a pool stick will not split his skull—*thwack*."

Where did this appear? The New Yorker? People? Esquire? No, it's from *Easy Times the Hard Way* by Barry McDermott in Sports Illustrated, where the world of sport, like the world at large, has its seamy underside.

Sports Illustrated

We are sports in print.

VIEWPOINT

by BEN YAGODA

A GREAT ZEAL FOR JUSTICE, SAYS THE AUTHOR, PERMEATES BASEBALL RULES

Hotchpotch, much less complicated, seems a more common alternative to a trust. But it is also shown in the American estate planning system. But even if you make a hotchpotch will, it is subject to the provisions of Federal estate tax, in the form of a credit. It is also subject to the provisions of state inheritance tax, which may also be subject to Federal estate tax. And, finally, it is subject to the provisions of state inheritance tax, which may also be subject to Federal estate tax.

Since the time taken for a cell to exit the cell cycle is the same as the time taken for a spot to appear and disappear, it is found that the frequency of appearance and disappearance of the two karyotypes is the same, and that each type of cell can be found in approximately equal numbers in the fraction of the population known to be in the mitotic phase of the cell cycle. This is the case for the most physiologically active cells, and for the slower growing cells, such as that of *Physalis*. The number of cells in the mitotic phase is not small, and the number of cells in each cycle is not small, so that the cell cycle can be followed for a long time, and the frequency of appearance and disappearance of the two karyotypes can be determined.

Downing (booklet) notes the common error that the word "infinitely" can be used to describe the number of times a number is divided by itself, and that the word "infinitely" can be used to describe the number of times a number is multiplied by itself. This is a common error because the word "infinitely" is often used to describe the number of times a number is divided by itself, and the word "infinitely" is often used to describe the number of times a number is multiplied by itself.

[illegible]

While Douglas also, it must be said, writes less masterfully, he gives a more intimate view of the author's life and work. The very words he used in his books and letters of the same time are



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GOODYEAR

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since. It implies on the one hand that everything a player does is worth recording and remembering, and also that his lifetime worth is to be figured over the long run (162 games, 500 at least, giving him the opportunity to right any mistake).

Statistics are also remarkable for the importance they give to intention, as opposed to result. This is a luxury that the low itself cannot always afford, and it is the mark of a truly advanced system of ethics. That a player has landed on first, for instance, is far less important statistically than how he got there. He is not charged with a time at bat if he has walked or been hit by a pitch or sacrificed himself (self a highly moral concept) but is charged with an at bat and an out if he has pined first on an error or fielder's choice. In addition, it is credited as a stolen base, not a wild pitch, passed ball or error, if a runner intends to steal and the play to get him out is somehow bungled.

Other statistics are designed to ensure that a player is responsible for his own actions, but not for anyone else's. A batter is awarded an RBI if he makes an out and a run scores; but not if he hits into a double play (that would be too charitable). The most important statistic for a pitcher is earned run average, which absolves him from runs he can't prevent—except in the case of runners on base when he leaves the game, who are his responsibility. And new statistics save home-run percentage, slugging average, on base percentage—are being developed all the time so that achievement is duly recognized.

But the ultimate demonstration of baseball's zeal for justice are the guidelines for determining the winning pitcher when more than one man has pitched for the victory. They are complicated in their attempt to give credit where credit is due, and the 1978 baseball rules deserve to be quoted at length.

Credit the starting pitcher with a game won only if he has pitched at least five complete innings and his team not only is in the lead when he is replaced but remains in the lead the remainder of the game.

When the starting pitcher cannot be credited with the victory... And during the tenure of the starting pitcher, the winning team receives the lead, and maintains it to the end of the game... credit the victory to the relief pitcher, indeed by the scorer to have been most effective.

Normally, the winning relief pitcher shall be the one who is the pitcher at record when his team assumes the lead.

EXCEPTION: Do not credit a victory to a relief pitcher who pitches briefly or ineffectively if a succeeding relief pitcher pitches effectively in helping to maintain his team in the lead.

When a pitcher is removed for a substitute batter or substitute runner, all runs scored by his team during the inning in which he is removed shall be credited to his benefit.

In sum, the game cares

END

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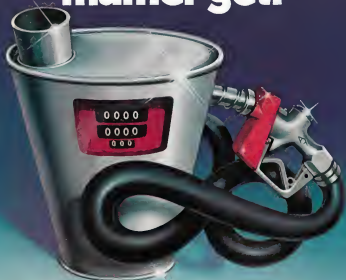
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*24 EPA estimated MPG, 38 highway estimate. Remember, compare estimated MPG to the estimated MPG of other cars. You may get different mileage depending on your speed, trip length and weather. Your actual highway mileage will probably be less than the estimated highway fuel economy. Calif. estimates lower.



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accurate, you'll *never* have to fine tune any channel again. *Ever.*

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You've probably noticed how colors can change when a commercial or new program appears. ColorTrak deals with that problem two ways: Automatic Color Control continuously monitors color and adjusts it automatically. Colors stay consistent from scene to scene, program to program, channel to channel.

In addition, ColorTrak is equipped with Dynamic Flesh-tone Correction that automatically keeps flesh tones warm and natural, for a consistently lifelike color picture.

"My coat is green."

"My cape is red."

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A black matrix on the tube helps absorb reflected room light.

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SCORECARD

Edited by JERRY KIRSHENBAUM

CHAIN REACTION

Nobody knows for sure what the long-term effects of the accident at the nuclear power plant on Three Mile Island will be. Apart from concern about radiation emitted into the skies above eastern Pennsylvania, there is apprehension over contamination of the Susquehanna River, which flows past the plant.

The Susquehanna is the principal freshwater feeder into Chesapeake Bay. Dr. Joseph Mihursky, a University of Maryland ecologist who specializes in the environmental impact of power plants, says that within three months after a major radiation release into the Susquehanna, the contaminants would start appearing in the bay, depositing bioconcentrates that would adversely affect plankton, oysters and clams. Radiation then would spread through the food chain: the plankton and shellfish would be consumed by small fish, which would be eaten by bigger fish, and so on, to the muskrat and otter that feed in the aren't rich marshlands. Waterfowl would also be affected and would transport radioactivity as far as the Arctic Circle.

Assuming that the release of radiation was "minimal," as the Nuclear Regulatory Commission asserted last week, this is no more than a scenario. But it is a scenario that is all too plausible. Because of the need for water for cooling purposes, nuclear plants are usually built next to rivers or lakes, whose ecological systems could be gravely damaged by nuclear accidents.

MARATHON IN PARADISE

It was probably only a matter of time, but the running boom has finally reached the South Pacific. To celebrate Flag Day, a big holiday in American Samoa, 75 runners are expected to compete on April 17 in the first Pago Pago Coconut Marathon. The race will start at 4 a.m. in the village of Lauli and pass through Pago Pago westward to the village of Futa before cutting back to Ulauli Beach,

the territory's most popular swimming spot. The reason for the early start is that the weather in Samoa can get pretty stifling, with humidity above 90% by midmorning. A three-mile stretch of hills, 14 miles into the race, is expected to take its toll, but survivors can look forward to a postmarathon swim. The finish line is just 10 paces from the inviting waters of the Pacific.

DONING THE HONORS

Owner Charlie Finley didn't have anybody throw out a ceremonial first ball when the Oakland A's opened their home season Friday night. When a reporter for the *San Francisco Chronicle* called to ask about it, Finley said, "Sure, you can throw out the first ball." But the 25 other big league teams followed—or will follow—tradition. By the time the last of the home openers is played on April 17, first balls will have been thrown out by:

Mayors: Dennis Kucinich (Cleveland), Ed Koch (New York Mets), Jim McCann (Houston) and Richard Caliguiri (Pittsburgh).

Governor: Al Quie (Minnesota).

Ex-Ballplayers: Stan Hack (Chicago Cubs) and Charlie Gehringer (Detroit).

Actor: Cary Grant (Los Angeles).

Boxer: Middleweight contender Tony Chuavirini (Kansas City).

Owner: Gene Autry (California).

Soldier: Sgt. Fred Patterson, a member of the U.S. Army paratroop team, the Golden Knights (Philadelphia).

Ex-Sportscaster: Bob Elson (Chicago White Sox).

War Hero's Widow: Mrs. William James (New York Yankees).

Courageous Auto-Accident Victim: Kathy Miller, 15, daughter of ex-Dodger Pitcher Larry Miller (Atlanta).

Masses: Fredbird (St. Louis).

Year-of-the-Child Honorees: Trish Magwood, 8 (Toronto), and Jean Olivier, 13 (Montreal).

Tandems: County Executive Bill O'Donnell and Marquette Basketball Coach Hank Raymonds (Milwaukee);

Governor Edward J. King and Shane Mitus, 8, leukemia patient (Boston); Mayor William C. Schaefer, former Mayor Tommy D'Alesandro Jr. and ex-player (and ex-manager) Billy Hunter (Baltimore); and the sons of slain Mayor George Moscone, Christopher, 16, and Jonathan, 14 (San Francisco).

Fans: In Seattle, Cincinnati, Texas and San Diego.

WIENERGATE

The matter before San Francisco's Recreation and Park Commission seemed routine. Ordered by health officials to prewrap all hot dogs sold in the stands, Stevens California Enterprises, Inc., the concessionaire at Candlestick Park, complained that this forced it to buy \$50,000 in new equipment and spend an extra \$25,000 a year for labor. To cover these expenses, the commission approved Stevens' request for a nickel surcharge on



the price of both vendied hot dogs—to 75¢—and, for good measure, beer.

That was last July, and a baseball fan named Ron Gordon hasn't stopped beefing. Gordon, a high school biology teacher, noted that the cost of the new equipment could be amortized over 10 years—thus the yearly cost would be \$5,000. He also learned that the main piece of new equipment, a hot-dog wrapping machine, could be operated at a rate that would increase labor costs by only \$1,092 a year. He then computed that the surcharge would bring in 1,836,740 nickels, or \$91,837, a year at San Francisco Grant and 49¢ games, a windfall of \$85,745 above costs incurred because of the new equipment.

Incensed by what he called Wiener-

continued



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Commentary by Maitland Edey

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gote, Gordon has hunted public officials and the media under an avalanche of data, spending \$800 out of his own pocket for postage and phone calls. Last September he appeared before the commission with elaborate charts and said that if Stevens' figures were accurate, employees using the new hot-dog machine were wrapping only 2 1/2 hot dogs a minute. Then, in a minute, he wrapped a dozen of them himself, by hand.

Stevens replies that part of the 5¢ surcharge goes for taxes and vendor commissions. But some commission members admit that Gordon was very much in their minds when Stevens requested increases in concession prices last month. The commission cut back most of the requests, approving an increase in the price of hot dogs, for example, only to 80¢ instead of 85¢ as Stevens had asked. However, last July's nickel surcharge has not been rolled back and the persistent Gordon is now threatening court action. He says, "Some people seem to think, 'Well, it's just a nickel, but three nickels can sure add up.'"

LIVING LEGEND

They held a Wilbur Hutsell Appreciation Day at Auburn Saturday and it was quite an occasion. First Auburn beat Alabama in a dual track meet at Wilbur Hutsell Track, 83-71. Then a crowd of 300 filled the Auburn Union's ballroom for a testimonial dinner. Wilbur Hutsell himself, 86, was there in a wheelchair.

Hutsell came to Auburn in 1921 and for various periods was the trainer, athletic director and basketball coach. But he was best known as the track coach, a job he held for 42 years. Auburn didn't award track scholarships during most of that time, but Hutsell uncovered athletes in physical-education classes and by means of a "cake race," in which winners received a homemade cake and a kiss from Miss Auburn. Making the most of available talent, he had a 140-25-4 dual-meet record. He also was a three-time Olympic coach.

Hutsell never really retired. In 1963 he and assistant track coach Mel Rosen switched jobs, Hutsell, then 70, staying on to coach hurdlers, jumpers and weight men. In 1973 he fell and broke his hip, but he returned less than a year later, moving about in pitter-punter shoes, cane in hand as he coached men 60 years his junior. A month ago, Hutsell was driving his car when he made one of his pat-

ternal midnight golf runs and collided with a state trooper's car. It was because of injuries suffered in that accident that he was in the wheelchair last week.

Despite his advancing age, Hutsell helped several current members of Auburn's team, including world-class hurdler James Walker and Olympic sprinter Harvey Glance. "He's a great technique man," Walker says. "He helps you with the little things that cut a 10th off a second off your time here and there." And Glance says, unashamedly, "I love him."

Whether or not he recovers from his recent injuries sufficiently to resume his duties, Hutsell's legend is intact. The Wilbur Hutsell Cake Race remains a major event on Auburn's fall calendar, and past and present Auburn athletes cherish their association with him. Moreover, nobody will ever surpass the classic succinctness of the pep talk Hutsell once issued to his cross-country team: "Hurry, baby."

MY FELLOW MUSHROOMS...

When New England Patriot Coach Chuck Fairbanks told owner Bill Sullivan last Dec. 18 that he intended to accept an offer to coach at the University of Colorado next season, Sullivan exploded. Fairbanks had four years left on his contract, and the Patriots were getting ready for the playoffs. After suspending and then reinstating Fairbanks, the owner won a court injunction preventing him from leaving.

Last week the Fairbanks affair took another turn. Spring practice began in Boulder and there was Fairbanks, gray hair blowing in the wind, directing the Colorado team in calisthenics. He had become Colorado's coach after all, having been ransomed by the Flatiron Club, an organization of well-heeled Colorado hoosers headed by Orlan Jack Vickers. It was Vickers who had first approached Fairbanks about the Colorado job. He had also arranged to supplement the coach's proffered \$45,000 salary with \$90,000 a year for TV and radio appearances. And now it turned out that the Flatiron Club had agreed to pay \$200,000 to the Patriots to win Fairbanks' release from his contract.

Details of that settlement were confirmed only under pressure from Colorado Governor Richard D. Lamm, who complained that "the citizens of this state were being treated like mushrooms—kept in the dark and a bunch of nonsense spread on us." Lamm's outrage was un-

derstandable. Jack Vickers is not an employee of the University of Colorado; nor is he even an alumnus. Yet, unusual as the hiring of Chuck Fairbanks was, concerning him was the University of Colorado. In its name he made job offers to a man already under contract and then secretly negotiated a settlement that some people at the university found rather extravagant, especially since it came at a time when the state legislature was cutting the school's budget. Said Conrad McBride, chairman of Colorado's political science department, "All the things that are wrong with intercollegiate athletics have surfaced in this incident."

BAT, BALL & BIRD

Larry Bird hasn't decided yet whether he will sign with the Boston Celtics, but he has apparently reached agreement in his baseball negotiations. A while ago, Indiana State Baseball Coach Bob Warn said to Bird, "You'd better get a bat, big fella," and the Sycamores' basketball star replied, "I'd like to try it." That was all Warn had to hear. He's now planning to put Bird into the lineup for at least a few innings, either at first base or as designated hitter. Bird's baseball debut could occur over the Easter weekend, when the Sycamores play doubleheaders at home on successive days against Southern Illinois and Evansville, respectively.

Doting fans in Terre Haute will no doubt turn out in large numbers for the chance to see Bird play baseball. But Warn, whose team has a 16-3 record, sees Bird as a fence buster as well as a gate builder. Bird was a promising pitcher on his high school team as a freshman but then quit to concentrate on basketball. He has played softball the last couple of summers in Terre Haute, and Warn says, "Larry just punishes a softball, I don't think it would take him long to get ready to hit a baseball. And we've got a uniform that just happens to fit."

THEY SAID IT

• Don Stanhouse, Baltimore Orioles pitcher, on how he made Pitching Coach Ray Miller cut short a conference at the mound last season. "I said, 'What can you tell me I don't know?' I know the bases are loaded. I know we are leading by one run. I know I have two balls on the batter. I know I have to throw a strike. I know I have to try."

END

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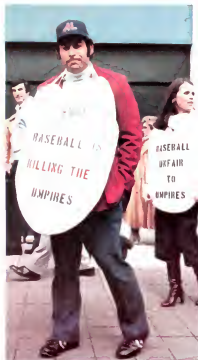
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THEY'RE OUT!

As the umps beat the pavement to get higher pay, the majors brought in the likes of forklift salesmen to make the calls

by E. M. SWIFT



It was Opening Day in Cincinnati, and 22 major league baseball umpires were picketing outside Riverfront Stadium, trying to muster sympathy for their job action that was keeping them off the field and putting a motley assortment of *dunce league* and amateur umps on it in their stead. With the holdouts was their attorney, Richard (Call Me Richie) Phillips, the man who had counseled them not to sign their 1979 contracts, Charles (Call Me Chub) Feeney, president of the National League, walked by and said to Phillips, "Richie, why the hell do you feel so strong?"

"I feel strong because I have a case and you don't," Phillips replied. "I have a case, and I have the fans and your owners with me."

"The owners aren't with you."

"If the owners aren't with me, then they're lying to me, Chub."

"Then they're lying to you," Feeney turned, passing one of the umpires wearing the blue uniform of the National League. He had a white cardboard sign hanging from his neck cut in the shape of a chest protector. *BASEBALL IS FAIR TO UMPIRES* was written across it.

"Look what you've got me doing, Mr. Feeney," said the ump.

"I don't have you doing that. He does," said Feeney, pointing to Phillips. "All you have to do is sign your contract and come back to work."

That was as close as Feeney was willing to come to negotiating.

While Al Clark and an ump's wife picketed in New York, Card Manager Ken Boyer and Phillie Phanatic Bobby Wine went over ground rules in St. Louis with Paul Pryor (left), one of the two regular umps on duty, and stand in Bob Sharp.



potating the dispute last week, though baseball would soon find the absence of its regular ump's embarrassing. Feeney and American League President Lee MacPhail, the men in charge of providing umpires for their respective leagues, seemed to have adopted an intransigent bargaining strategy: sign and come back, don't sign, don't come back. The whole business, they indicated, was a matter of principle and there was no room for negotiation. But by last Sunday, the season's fifth day, their approach seemed to be failing, because as the moloch swelled to a mountain, players and managers were growing increasingly impatient for the return of major league umpires.

There was good reason to believe that undermining Phillips was more important to the league presidents than upholding any principle. Fifty major league umpires retained Phillips during the off-season to represent them individually during their 1979 salary bargaining. Actually, there have never been any real negotiations between the leagues and any of the 50 umpires. Last winter, as has been the tradition, the league presidents simply sent new contracts to the umpires, asking them to sign and return the documents by the first day of spring training—or be replaced. This was the way things had always worked, and until this year there had never been a holdout. Now, suddenly, there were 50 Phillips, who became the umpires' counsel in 1978, advised his clients not to sign the contracts and then set about getting salaries more in line with those of NBA refs—whom Phillips also represents.

It is debatable whether a meaningful comparison can be drawn between the salaries of officials in one sport and those in another. But for the record, an NBA official with 10 years' experience makes \$550 per game over an 82-game schedule, or about \$45,000 a season. Under existing wage scales, an umpire with 10 years in the majors who works a 162-game schedule makes about \$200 a game or approximately \$32,500 a season. To proclaim that baseball is unfair to umpires may be overstating the case, when the average ump's salary is nearly \$30,000 and he is allowed first-class air fare. But fairness is in the eye of the beholder—a judgment call, as it were. Suffice it to say that baseball is not as fair to its officials as basketball is to its.

Technically, the umpires are not on strike. They have a no-strike clause in

their collective-bargaining agreement, which runs through 1981. It is not the collective-bargaining agreement that is at issue now, as it was last August, when the umpires were ordered back to work by a U.S. District Court judge after a one-day walkout. This time around, the controversy centers on individual salaries. Phillips is asking an additional \$520,000 in pay for the 50 umpires, which breaks down to \$20,000 per team—or about what it will cost the Pirates for Dave Parker's services this week.

"We feel very strongly about this," says MacPhail. "We're not ready to abandon what we feel is the historical pattern of salaries, which the umpires knew very well and accepted when they signed the basic agreement. Everybody's perspective gets a little twisted today, particularly in our business where you have these tremendous players' salaries. But it's sort of incongruous to sit in a court and listen to an umpire say how badly paid he is when it turns out he's getting more than the judge hearing the case. As a group they're well paid, in the top 7% of wage earners in the country. We're not pleading poverty. This is a matter of principle."

To which Phillips answers, "The major stumbling block is the stubbornness of MacPhail and Feeney. As league presidents, they have nothing to do but sign baseballs each year and control the umpires. Now that they have seemingly lost control of the umpires, the only thing left for them to do is sign the hell, and I think they're afraid that baseball isn't going to pay them a hundred grand a year each for their autographs."

Of the 52 regular umpires, the only two to sign their contracts were first-year man Ted Hendry of the American League and 18-season National League Paul Pryor. Hendry did so without knowledge of the pending walkout, but Pryor deliberately broke ranks. Dick Stello has umpired 10 seasons on the National League, last Thursday, while picketing the Yankees' home opener, he said. "The funny thing is that Feeney told us in 1977 while we were working on the agreement that established minimum pay levels for years of service, 'You guys are forcing me to give my worst umpire an \$8,000 raise.' That was Pryor. Eighteen years and they've never even made him a crew chief. The umpires' association did that for him, and this is how he pays us back. I'll probably never speak to him again."

Pryor's conscience gave him fits for



Feeney hears it from Brewer boss Hamberger

three days, and then Friday night he called Dave Phillips, a fellow umpire, to ask if the group would welcome him back if he quit working. "He told me they were the worst three days of his life," Phillips says. "He said he needed \$5,000 to pay his bills or he'd go to jail. He'd invested a lot of money in these travel bags that he was selling, and he was going broke. I told him he'd sold his soul and he'd have to live with himself. But it's sad. An umpire should have enough money in his pocket so that he doesn't have to go around peddling stuff."

Pryor did not umpire the next day, but he returned to work in St. Louis on Sunday when it was discovered that his contract required that he give the league 10 days' notice before quitting. It has been reported that Hendry may resign early this week.

In the ump's absence, baseball has scrambled to round up crew chiefs who have had experience umpiring professional games, usually in the high minor leagues. Each chief has been working with three local umpires brought in by the home team. These are men who customarily pick up a few hucks working college and other amateur games. Two days before the respective league openers in Cincinnati and Seattle last Wednesday, nine minor league umpires were signed to contracts that guarantee them major league salaries. No sooner were these sig-

natures on the contracts than the name-calling got started in earnest.

Three of the holdouts, Joe West, Richie Garcia and Steve Palermo, said that one of the men hired as a crew chief, a minor league ump, allegedly had run up gambling debts in New England last year after betting on football and basketball. The same ump was reportedly fired from a Latin American league this winter. Barney Deary, the supervisor of minor league umpires, says he investigated the charges and found no wrongdoing.

Customarily, before an umpire is hired, his background is thoroughly checked out by two former FBI agents on the commissioner's staff, who pay special attention to determining if the prospect is a gambler. This precaution has not been given top priority in light of the dearth of quality umpires. That certainly jeopardizes the "integrity of baseball," which used to be Bowie Kuhn's favorite topic before he began talking mostly about how satisfied he is with the manner in which the league presidents are handling the umpire dispute. "They check on your neighbors, former employers, relatives," says Dave Phillips, a crew chief in only his ninth season, who was offered less than \$30,000 by MacPhail this year. "It seems ludicrous that if a man has that kind of background, the major leagues would hire him, when they ordinarily take such elaborate precautions."

The alleged gambler is not the only replacement who has drawn the fire of the embittered umpires. Al Forman, an Eastern Collegiate Athletic Conference ump who was behind the plate for the Yankee opener and performed flawlessly, was the object of derision, having been canned by the National League 14 years ago. One of the minor-leaguers who accepted a contract was regarded scornfully for purportedly bursting into tears as he explained that bucking the strike was the only way he'd ever make the big leagues.

Jimmy Dunne, another ECAC umpire and a salesman of forklift trucks in real life, was one of the Yankee Stadium crew for New York's opening series with Milwaukee. The ruddy-faced, snow-white-haired Dunne, 58, was acutely aware of how the amateurs' presence was being viewed. "Everyone's looking at us with a jaundiced eye," he said. "Ordinarily it's just the players who are against you, but now it's the fans and the umpires, too. Everyone's hoping we fall right on our faces."

Some of the replacement umpires did just that, and with increasing frequency as the week wore on. In Boston and Cincinnati, for example, second-base umpires had to be repeatedly asked to move out of the batter's field of vision. In Kansas City, where Toronto was playing, Rick Bosetti hit a grounder to Royal First Baseman John Wathan in the second inning Thursday. Wathan bobbled the ball as the runner crossed the bag, but Bosetti was called out by Umpire Harold Easley, who makes his living working for a chain of drugstores. Bosetti threw his helmet in anger, which immediately brought K.C. Manager Whitey Herzog from the bench, demanding Bosetti be ejected for helmet slinging, as the American League rules stipulate. Crew Chief John Shulock, an ump from the American Association, said he had never heard of the rule. Replied Herzog, "I wouldn't bull you about this. If you don't believe me, just ask our third-base coach, Chuck Hiller." Bosetti got the thumb.

Reminded that Easley was an "amateur" umpire, Bosetti said after the game, "The guy was getting paid, wasn't he?" (He was: \$108.02 a game, the same as the other temporary umpires.) That makes him a professional. Here's a man just off the sandlot. It must have been a real trip for him tonight."

Although the going got similarly rough for many of the other major league nov-

ices, one stand-in ump who went on a joyride was Murray Srey, a meter supervisor who worked the plate Saturday night in Houston, where Asaro Ken Forsch pitched a no-hitter. Not surprisingly, Forsch thought Srey had done a terrific job.

No-hitters aside, the longer the regular umpires stay out, the more instances of ineptness will take place. And there will be more name-calling. And more damage to baseball's reputation. By week's end, some of the owners were growing restless. In light of the players' huge salaries, few begrudge the umpires their modest demands, if meeting them will restore some order. It is said that the best-officiated game is the one in which the umpires are least noticed. That is hardly possible when every umpire on the field is wearing a different color suit—black, gray, navy—and spectators and players alike are scrutinizing their every move.

Because the league presidents have backed themselves into a corner, it will likely take a third party to get negotiations started. Perhaps the commissioner will descend from his throne. If he does, the umpires are likely to be winners, not because they have crippled baseball with their absence or because their replacements have performed all that unsatisfactorily. They'll win because this whole business has been a terrible—and embarrassing—nuisance. **END**



Bill Kuntz, an American Leaguer, tried to convince fans that the umpires' pay is miserably low.



Mission Hills yielded 14 birdies to Post, whose 28 birdies put on the PGM hole put her on top for good.

A PRETTY POST PATTERN

In winning the Colgate-Dinah Shore, Sandra Post matched Nancy Lopez shot for shot for three days and then took command **by BARRY McDERMOTT**

Sandra Post chipped in as, at the Nan-
cy Lopez legend last week, beginning
the Colgate-Dinah Shore Winners Circle
tournament as a woman scorned, at least
in her own mind, and then going on to
beat a host of real and imagined oppo-
nents to win the \$37,500 first-place prize.

Post was a survivor in Palm Springs.
All week people waited for the wind to
blow, and Post to be blown away with
it. Neither happened. The veteran gol-
fer shot a final round of 70 to finish at 276,
12 under par on the decade Mission Hills
course. That figure beat the tournament
record by seven strokes, and Lopez by
one, and put to rest Sandra Post who
under pressure held her putter like a vac-
uum cleaner and had a reputation for
flinching and finishing second. Post now
has won the richest prize in women's
golf two straight years. "My major," she
calls the championship. No more twitches
for Sandra.

Besides the money, the win gave her
a great amount of personal satisfaction,
especially because of an incident that
might be termed the Great Program Flap,
and because she had to beat Lopez to
win. All through the week, the two
matched birdies around the course, and
were tied coming down the stretch Sun-
day following Post's chip in from 35 feet
at the 12th hole.

And with Mission Hills' most difficult
stretch of holes still remaining, it was as-
sumed that Post would fold. This time it
was Lopez who lost her gyroscope, sail-
ing a four-iron shot well to the right of
the par-3 11th and hogging the hole.
Meanwhile, on the hole behind, Post was
watching a birdie putt approach the edge
of the cup, and, as she said, "make a last-
minute decision to go in." When the ball
toppled, so did Lopez' chances.

Nancy had to settle for the second-
place check of \$24,500, and Pat Bradley,
who shot a 69 in the final round, and
Donna White, with a 70, shared third
place at 281, earning \$15,000 apiece.

These figures are noteworthy because
they underline the fact that the women's
tour is paying its own way, record crowds
turned out for the Winners Circle. On
Sunday alone, 29,000 fans were on hand.
And a big reason was Nancy Lopez, who
shared or was only a stroke off the lead
every day.

Lopez and Colgate are responsible
for adding luster to women's golf
because each has propelled the tour
to new heights, one by means of a

checkbook, the other using a scorecard.

David Foster became the fiscal angel for women's athletics eight years ago when he instituted the Dinah Shore, the first \$100,000 LPGA tournament, and he got the company involved in other women's golf events, as well as in skiing, track and tennis. But Foster resigned as president and chief executive officer of Colgate earlier this year and was replaced by Keith Crane, known as a bottom-line executive who is expected to pull the company back to the motherlode of detergent sales. Last week, some of the players thought it ominous that the balls on the practice range had a red stripe pointed around them, an economy move. Early last week, Ray Volpe, the commissioner of women's golf, said that he had not yet met with Crane, although the LPGA had signed a contract with Colgate for the 1980 Dinah Shore. "After taking eight years to build this monument, it would be a shame to give it up," Volpe said. When Volpe took over as commissioner in mid-1975, only two women's events were on the tube. This year there will be at least a dozen, and the ratings are healthy, a good indication that, with a bona fide star like Lopez, the LPGA doesn't need Colgate as much as it once did.

Someday the movies will do Lopez' life story. Right now she is living a Hollywood script: a small-town girl of Mexican descent, with a widowed father, Domingo, who taught her the game when he wasn't busy running an auto body shop in Roswell, N. Mex. Lopez won nine tournaments in her rookie year and came to the Dinah Shore with a 1979 record that included two victories, two seconds and a tie for ninth in five starts. Since turning professional she has played in 38 events, winning 11 of them and finishing second eight times.

To the rest of the players she is a big pain in the neck, whether she is winning a tournament or not. The question now is not so much whether Lopez can be beaten, but whether she has intimidated the other women. NBC devoted itself to that notion recently when it interviewed the players during a telecast. And two weeks ago, when Nancy lost the Kemper Open to JoAnne Carner in a playoff, there was cheering in the locker room (as there has been on the PGA Tour when Jack Nicklaus misses a putt).

On Wednesday, the day before the start of the tournament, Fred Robledo

wrote a story in the *Los Angeles Herald Examiner* about jealousy on the women's circuit over Lopez' success. The headline was: FOR LOPEZ, IT'S GETTING LONELY AT TOP. That evening Post skipped the pretournament party, even though she was to be feted as defending champion, leaving Crane clutching a microphone and asking, "Is Sandra Post here yet?" while lamely holding aloft an oil portrait of her. Post, her friends said, was miffed because her picture wasn't on the cover of the tournament program—Lopez' was—and because she wasn't invited to play in the program group of Gerald Ford and Dinah Shore—Lopez was. In the past, the defending champion has usually had both honors.

Another source of friction is that Lopez' caddie, Roscoe Jones, gets more publicity than most of the women golfers—and occasionally better treatment. Last year, Kathy McMullen, an LPGA player council member, complained to a tournament sponsor that Jones was in the clubhouse drinking beer in violation of LPGA rules. The sponsor told McMullen that if she didn't like it, she could leave. She did.

At times the other women would seem to have reason for feeling neglected. Judy Rankin, who has 25 tour victories, was the top Colgate-Dinah Shore money-winner, having taken home more than \$68,000 in the previous seven events. She also is the host pro at Mission Hills and was an obvious threat to win. On Thursday she shot 67 for the opening-round lead. But that afternoon the media appeared to be just as interested in finding out why Lopez, after a 68, left without a visit to the press tent. ("No one asked me," she explained on Friday.)

Incidents like this, coupled with all Lopez' victories, build ill will in veteran players, who complain that the phenom is too young to remember when the tour was a backwoods attraction. "I can feel the resentment," said the 22-year-old Lopez after her second-round 70 moved her into a tie for the lead with a grim-faced Post and Chako Higuchi of Japan at 138, six under par. "I've never done anything to those girls, except beat them," she said. "It doesn't bother me. I don't hang around with them anyway."

And, tired of being approached by a stream of disgruntled players complaining that the LPGA was hyping Lopez while ignoring the rest, Volpe posted a note in the locker room suggesting they

quit complaining and acting like a bunch of women. "I can't help it that when Mackey Wright played, no one knew how great she was," Volpe says. "I tell the girls, if you want the press to stop writing about Lopez, go out and beat her."

Lopez is hitting the ball even farther now than she did in her rookie season, when she won five tournaments in a row. And she is among the tour's best putters. "God puts for her," an onlooker said, "and Godzilla hits her driver." On par-5 holes Lopez often is 150 yards ahead of her playing partners after two shots, and she was the only player in the field able to reach all of Mission Hills' par-5s in two, including the lake-guarded 502-yard 18th. The combination of strength and finesse helped her run off strings of three and four birdies in the first and second rounds.

On Saturday, Higuchi fell out of the lead with a back-nine 42 while the tour's top three money-winners, Carner, Lopez and Post, who were playing together, were making 15 birdies among them. Post and Lopez shot 68s to remain tied for the lead at 206, 10-under, while Carner had a 70 and moved into third place at 209, a stroke ahead of Rankin.

Carner does a little dance when she makes a birdie putt; the players call it "the Carner Disco." They also have named her "Big Momma," as much for her age as her girth; she turned 40 last week, and Dinah Shore celebrated the occasion by giving her a gold necklace that spelled "Perfect," except that the last letter was askew. That could describe Carner's golf game, because occasionally her brilliance dims, as happened on Friday when she followed a front-nine 31 with a 39. "Sometimes the wheels come off," she admitted.

Carner has another necklace, which has a charm that is the symbol of the Las Vegas hotel in whose casino she and her husband Don last month lost \$11,000. Carner is not accustomed to losing. Coming into the Colgate-Dinah Shore she had won three tournaments this year, giving her 21 victories since 1974. No one has won more in that span.

In another era and another place, those statistics would be very impressive. But now on Sunday there was smiling Nancy Lopez out front. "Go out and beat her," the commissioner had advised. And so Sandra Post, who has finished second so often, did just that. She might even make the program cover next year. **END**

THE EFFECT WAS TO GRIND THEM UP

Road-hugging "ground effect" cars were all the rage at the Long Beach Grand Prix, and while they may be considered black magic, it was Gilles Villeneuve's disappearing act in a bob-nosed Ferrari that astounded everyone **by SAM MOSES**

One of the few things in this world more difficult than winning a world driving championship is successfully defending it. It has been 19 years since Jack Brabham of Australia was able to do so driving a Cooper in 1959 and 1960. Since then, not even the likes of Jimmy Clark, Graham Hill, Jackie Stewart or Niki Lauda—with nine titles among them—have been able to hang on to their championships for two consecutive seasons. The difference between 1960 and 1979 is clear: pressure. Things just aren't as simple as they were when the tires were skinny and the drivers fat, instead of the other way around.

Now it is Mario Andretti's turn at the pressurized bucket seat. And it couldn't have been very comfortable for him at Long Beach last Sunday as 24 starting Formula One cars prepared to race over the city's streets for a piece of the \$600,000 purse in the Long Beach Grand Prix. For three days he had had nighing problems in practice, and for three days the world champion had worn a scowl or a look of worry. This is the kind of thing that happens when a conquering hero returns home to find himself an underdog. Finally, it took a daring pass with a little more than two laps to go for Andretti to finish fourth and collect three more points in his title defense. And there seemed little he could do but sigh and head home to Nazareth, Pa., with the upcoming Spanish Grand Prix on his mind.

It was an unexciting race as Formula One events go, won for the third time in the race's four-year history by a Ferrari, driven on this occasion by the easygoing 5' 2" boyish Québécois Gilles Villeneuve, whose closest pursuer was his temperamental South African teammate Jody Scheckter, 29.38 seconds back. Alan Jones of Australia was third, 4.64 seconds ahead of Andretti's Lotus. The 27-year-old Villeneuve now leads the 1979 championship with 20 points after four races; Andretti, the reigning king, is sixth with eight.

The fastest driver through all but the final three minutes of qualifying had been

Carlos Reutemann, Andretti's new teammate and winner of last year's Long Beach race. But Villeneuve, after crashing almost as soon as practice began Friday—and shrugging it off as he does all his frequent shunts—slipped in a hot lap almost as the session was being flagged to a halt and stole the pole position from Reutemann by setting a new record of 1:18.825 for the 2.02-mile course. Considering that only 2 seconds separated the first five qualifiers, it was expected to be one very competitive race.

But most of the competition ended after the first lap, on which for the third time in four years one driver (Patrick Tambay) broke for a hairpin too little too late and bounded over the wheels of another driver (Niki Lauda). And that was the second attempt at a start. The first was aborted when Villeneuve apparently forgot to stop at the starting line after the warmup lap (and was lined 10,000 Swiss francs, about \$5,900, for the oversight).

More of the reason for the dull race, however, was the fact that two of the fastest five qualifiers—Reutemann and Jacques Laffite—were ordered to the rear of the pack after last-minute technical problems had forced them to switch into their backup cars instead of those in which they had qualified. Thus, Villeneuve started with a space next to him, where Reutemann was meant to be, an advantage Villeneuve may not have needed, he so dominated the race.

It was the second Villeneuve-Scheckter sweep in the second race for the new truncated T4 Ferraris. They are what is referred to as "ground effect" cars. Designers have decided they have gone about as far as they can in improving straight-line aerodynamics, and now are concentrating on road-holding, their current solution being streamlining the bellies of the cars. Turn a Formula One car upside down—and as they weigh only 1,180 pounds, two strong men could do just that fairly easily—and you will not see dark greasy things, but rather a smooth expanse of aluminum. That, combined with the skirts along the sides of

the car that actually skim the ground, creates a suction that holds these vehicles to the road. "This ground-effect business is something of a black art," says John Watson of the McLaren team. Watson knows whereof he speaks, despite having a pair of ground-effect cars. McLaren has earned only four points this season. "Nobody really knows for sure what they're doing when they design a ground-effect car," he says. "When they make a good one, as Ferrari has, they have to concede to a little bit of luck."

Getting the proud Italians to concede luck in the designing of an automobile would be infinitely more difficult than getting them to show it off, even if the car is rather odd looking. In contrast to the Lotus, with its long narrow snout, or the Brazilian Copercar, which seems inspired by the Concorde, the Ferrari



Villeneuve bared his fangs well last season



The new Ferrari looks as if it is missing some bodywork—but at Long Beach it carried Villeneuve to his second straight win and to the top of the standings

looks like a man with his nose bitten off. But it works, in particular on tight circuits like Long Beach.

The Ferrari might be the best car at the moment, but in the technoids' toy store that is Formula One racing, that can be a fleeting distinction. For example, in the first two races of the year, the Ligier driven by Lafitte was vastly superior and won easily, now all of a sudden it seems merely good. Soon there will be a new ground-effect Lotus. Considering the fact that the leader in the voodoo world of ground effect is considered to be Lotus designer Colin Chapman, Andreotti and Reutemann may soon find themselves once again with the best equipment on the track.

Despite his crown, Andreotti is currently in a more difficult position with Lotus than he was last season, largely because of Reutemann. Last year Andreotti got along well with his teammate, Ronnie Peterson (who was killed at Monza), but Reutemann is a tougher nut. He is a moody loner who doesn't become chummy with anyone.

Chapman, who understands drivers the way Angelo Dundee understands

fighters, leaves Reutemann to brood alone, and Reutemann seems to be responding by exercising himself of the erratic performances for which he is known. Last year he drove inconsistently for Ferrari, by whom he was less understood. Ferrari likes the fire to show in its drivers, but Reutemann has more ice than fire in his veins. Still, when he was good, he was very good, winning four races, second only to Andreotti's six.

Adding to Andreotti's frustration at Long Beach was the fact that things were going so smoothly for Reutemann during practice and qualifying. Despite the fact that Reutemann's and Andreotti's Lotuses were twins, Andreotti could not find the key to set up his car, for race cars are like snowflakes: no two are identical. "It's all just metal, and you think it should be the same, but it just isn't," Andreotti lamented after qualifying, when he was sixth fastest.

Villeneuve, meanwhile, was bouncing about, his mood as buoyant as Mario's was cautious. Villeneuve is in a position that many drivers dream of—one he should appreciate, says Andreotti. He is a Ferrari factory driver, who got there

without really paying his dues—which is not the same as saying he doesn't deserve to be there. After only a few Formula One races, he was hired as a Ferrari team driver at the end of the 1977 season. But the pressures on him, like those on Andreotti, are enormous, considering he is relatively untied, that he replaced a world champion (Lauda), and last but not least, that the pressures of driving for Ferrari are always enormous. But Villeneuve seems remarkably well equipped to handle them.

Last year at Long Beach, when he was a rookie, he led his teammate (then Reutemann) and the race for 38 laps, until he tried to lap a car where there was no room to pass. He crashed, knocked himself out of the race and handed it to Reutemann. Before Sunday's race, he was asked how well he remembered that near miss, and if he would do anything different today. He smiled at the question, as he does at most references to his errors. "There is no safe place to pass at Long Beach," he replied. "It is best to stay in front all day."

Villeneuve has learned a lot since last year.

END

IT'S WASHINGTON (CITY) VS. WASHINGTON (STATE), BY GEORGE

In a replay of last year's hard-fought NBA championship series, the Bullets and the SuperSonics should meet again in the final round, with the city breezing in five games this time **by CURRY KIRKPATRICK**

Really, now, how better to describe the NBA's late and in some ways lamentable, regular season than to say it featured the 11th commandment of Moses Malone—Thou shalt not steal my rebound—the Looking for Mr. Good Bird, the emergence of Dave Cowens as a “coach” and Lloyd Free as a “star”? Also, the Richie Powers Memorial Doubleheader, the Boh McAdoo pack-up-your-troubles-in-your-old-kilt-bag show and the New York Knicks and New Orleans Jazz sleepwalking festival.

Ohladi Ohladi. In professional basketball, life goes on.

And on. And on. And so, now, the playoffs. Certainly there are enough candidates for the finals from the East and West to satisfy all tastes. For aficionados of team play, *jose de vare*, hustle and 48-minute effort, there are the Phoenix Suns, Atlanta Hawks, Portland Trail Blazers, Houston Rockets and Kansas City Kings. For those who are of the star-wars and lonely-rich-guy persuasion, there are the Philadelphia 76ers, Los Angeles Lakers and Denver Nuggets. If one prefers to avoid watching defense at all costs, there are the San Antonio Spurs. And how about primal scream therapy? The NBA presents in living, screaming color the New Jersey Nets and Kevin (“They’re out to get me”) Loughery. The finalists will not be known, of course, until Brent Musberger opens the envelope, one hopes, sometime before August. But, alas, most of the signs point away from these teams and back toward the replay of last year’s championship series between the Washington Bullets and the Seattle SuperSonics.

Were it not for the fact that no team since the Bill Russell Celtics of 10 years ago has won back-to-back championships, the Bullets would be overwhelming favorites to repeat despite losing their last three games. History aside, they

An improved Lonnie Shelton has more than ampenised for the loss of center Marvin Webster



should win it all again—and this time more easily, defeating, say, Atlanta in five, Philly in six and Seattle in five—simply because they are the strongest, deepest, most confident, most adaptable and best team in the NBA. "To win twice, you have to be really mean to do that," says Indiana Coach Bob Leonard. Oh, yes. The Bullets may be the meanest team in the NBA as well.

The experience of winning the title in 1978 on the road (Washington overcame the home-court advantages of San Antonio, Philadelphia and, in the seventh and final game, Seattle) has sustained the club through this season, in which the Bullets were one of only two teams (the other was Seattle, 21-20) to have a winning record (23-18) away from home. When Golden State Guard John Lucas speaks of Washington as having the "smartest front line in the game," he is referring not only to Elvin Hayes, Wes Unseld and Bob Dandridge, all of whom put together marvelous seasons, but also to reserves Mitch Kupchak and Greg Ballard, whose enthusiasm, passing and offensive rebounding would make them starters, not to mention stars, in most other cities.

Coach Dick Motta's offense is designed for playmaker Tom Henderson to pound the ball inside, where Hayes is automatic on the turnaround jumper and Dandridge administers more one-on-one "facials" than anyone since Helena Rubenstein. In the Bullet system, the 31-year-old small forward known as "Pick," who seems to sleep through half the games, has become the NBA's most complete player. When aroused, Dandridge shoots, passes, defends and rebounds, and in last year's playoffs he even played some guard.

Elsewhere in the backcourt is shooter Kevin Grevey or whippets Charley Johnson and Larry Wright, or even rejuvenated former All-Star Phil Chenier. Motta says he has nine starters, but somewhere in this plethora of talent the coach has lost count.

continued



Big Wes Unseld is intent and so are the Bullets, who bring the league's best record into the playoffs



Phoenix depends on Davis' silky smooth moves

NBA PLAYOFFS (continued)

Nagging injuries to Kupchak and Greyve may be cause for concern, but of more significance is the Bulls' record (7-5) against three of their possible Eastern rivals: Central Division winner San Antonio, which has never won a game at the Capitol Centre in Landover, Md.; Houston, whose Malone gets gang-at-tacked and beat upon something awful by the Washington musclemen; and Atlanta, which Dandridge takes apart all by himself.

The survivor of the Atlanta-Houston opening-round mini-series will meet the Bulls, but by that time the magnificent runaway MVP, Malone, may be too exhausted to stand upright after the grabbing, clawing Hawks get through with him. As for the Hawks—in particular, John Drew and Tree Rollins, who are even money to foul out of a H-O-R-S-E game—they may be rendered deaf from the frequent, bellowing huranques of Coach Hubie Brown, who takes a back-seat to no one (not even Leughery) in anguished nonmaking.

In reality, only the Atlantic Division runner-up 76ers appear to be a threat to the Bulls before the championship round. This assumes that destiny's fallen

darlings, from Dr. Julius Erving on down to Darryl Dawkins, play well in the mini-series against their old doubleheader buddies, the Nets (surely you recall the New Jersey-Philadelphia game, which had to be replayed in part because of Powers' handing out two too many technical fouls), then defeat their running, gunning mirror images, the Spurs, in the following round.

"This team hasn't played to its potential because of injuries and a laissez-faire approach," says Philadelphia General Manager Pat Williams, "but I think everyone still fears the Sixers."

In the last few weeks, after injured Guard Doug Collins returned to the lineup and Erving reasserted himself, the Sixers were fearsome, getting 11 wins in a 13-game rampage down the stretch. But Collins was declared out of the playoffs because of a stress fracture in his left foot, so it will be up to Erving to inspire his teammates, as well as to contribute his own take-over skills.

The 76ers appear capable of handling the Nets whenever they wish, and they won the season series from the Spurs 3-1, "without our two centers and without Doug," as Coach Billy Cunningham points out. On the other hand, Collins has been the only Sixer able to contain San Antonio's incredible point machine, George Gervin. On still a third hand (in the NBA anything is possible), the Ice-man's run for his second straight scoring title has come at the expense of the Spurs' vaunted passing game. Gervin isn't passing much anymore. In addition, he has criticized Coach Doug Moe for not giving him more playing time. Having recently lost five of six home games, the Spurs are hardly jingling into the playoffs—where they usually collapse anyway. As Moe so eloquently puts it, "When things are going bad, they ain't going good."

Just as San Antonio could be emotionally unequipped to beat Philadelphia, the Sixers (especially without Collins) may be physically unequipped to defeat Washington. This is cruel irony, in that Cunningham traded for defensive specialist Bobby Jones and quick Guard Eric Money with the express purpose of containing the Bulls' Dandridge and equalizing the Bulls' backcourt speed, respectively. Philadelphia beat the champions three out of four this season: once after squandering a 32-point lead; once without Erving, Collins or Money; and

the last time at Landover when the Doctor was having one of his better nights. With Collins playing, the 76ers-Bulls might have been a classic series. Without him, not likely.

What everyone was able to witness in the Western Conference was a ferocious rumble right into the final weekend when the Pacific Division-winning Super-Sonics emerged with the best record (52-30), even though they finished the season with a shooting percentage (.468) that was the third-worst in the league. What the team lacks offensively, however, is more than made up for on defense; the Sonics led the league in lowest average point yield (103.9).

The Seattle defense takes over the moment opponents cross the center line and continues—unlike most teams' big-man fortifications—from the outside in. Dennis (D.J.) Johnson and Gus Williams are the finest pair of backcourt defenders in the sport, Johnson depending on his size (6' 4"), strength and jumping ability to neutralize the big scorers, Williams relying on quicksilver hands and anticipation out front.

Down low, Jack Sikma and Lonnie Shelton give the Sonics the kind of muscle more often displayed in the local aircraft plants, while John Salas, an exquisite passer, and Paul Silas, the aged bear, share the other forward spot. When Seattle lost Center Tom LaGarde early, Coach Lenny Wilkens moved Sikma to the pivot, where he averaged 12 rebounds. Shelton rapidly took over some of the scoring load (he hit 13 straight shots in one game) and the Sonics proceeded to lead the league in attendance—the Kingdom and that lovable buffoon of a mascot, T. Wheedle, helped—as well as to disprove the theory that their play-off performance of last spring was a case of astonishing luck.

Early in March, trouble appeared in the form of Silas' criticism that the Sonics were "a Cinderella team... built on emotion... but without foundation" and in the specter of Dennis Johnson's pouting about his contract. But a successful (5-2) late road trip laid the shipping to rest, and now only Downtown Fred Brown's fractured ring finger (on his non-shooting hand) might hinder the Sonics.

Until the championship round, Seattle would seem to overmatch any likely opponent. The Sonics have more quickness, more rebounding, more depth, a lot more defense than anybody else in the

continued

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West and the intangible quality of knowing each other well. Liking each other (gasp?) and understanding what this tournament is all about.

"We weren't respected last season," says D.J., whose complete-game qualities make him the best 43-percent-shooting player who ever lived. "But our adrenaline flowed into momentum, a piece stuck in everybody, and it's all still with us."

Whatever that means, it translates into trouble for the opposition. Among these are Midwest Division champ Kansas City, whose spectacular infant backcourt of Otis Birdsong and Phil Ford is possibly a year away, Denver, which, lacking injured George McGinnis, is a player away, and the Bill Walton-less Trail Blazers from Portland, who are both a year and a redheaded player behind.

That leaves the Los Angeles Lakers and the Phoenix Suns, both of whom must count on the whim and/or availability of a single man to prolong their seasons.

If Kareem Abdul-Jabbar can unwind from his sad malaise, not to mention the blistering attacks of a certain reviewer named Wilt Chamberlain, he should be motivated enough to carry the Lakers past their mini-series. By the same token, if the red-hot Suns can assimilate the reactivated Truck Robinson, who missed 15 games with a viral infection, into the complex workings of their family plan, they should put away the tough and much-improved Trail Blazers, then defeat Kansas City to come face-to-face with the men from Seattle.

In Los Angeles, Forward Adrian Dantley has displayed his muscles a lot and Jamaal Wilkes, who is about to become a two-time free agent, ran into a late-season shooting slump, and the truth is the Lakers have no rebounders to help Abdul-Jabbar on the glass and no guards to help Stormin' Norman Nixon in the backcourt. In defending his recent non-dominating performances, Kareem has declared that players are better today than in Chamberlain's time and "when a lion makes a kill, it doesn't growl or roar."

A couple of other references to the animal kingdom added to the Laker woes. "A dog" is what Abdul-Jabbar was allegedly called—there was a quick denial—by Coach Jerry West, who himself is surely a lame duck. Then Chamberlain

came hurtling off the volleyball court and into the fray like a yapping hyena. Wilt, a noted authority on the subject, accused Kareem of howling. "Moses Malone must have dunked over him seven or eight times," said Chamberlain. "Tom Owens embarrasses him. Look what Unseld did to him. It seems like all the centers are doing that to Kareem. The inside is his office. He should own that area. . ."

After their humbling first-round disappearance from the playoffs a year ago, the Suns are due for some postseason victories. "This time we're surging instead of limping," says Phoenix G.M. Jerry Colangelo. And, sure enough, the Suns won their final eight games, with the veteran Garfield Heard admirably filling in for Robinson.

Phoenix has the NBA's most mobile center in Alvan Adams, the most elegant forward in Walter Davis and a nonpareil guard in Paul Westphal, who finished in the top 10 in both scoring and assists, and they would win any three-on-three contest. Yet the Suns' long-range chances probably depend more on the consistency of their no-name bench, notably Mike Bratz, Joel Kramer, Hound McLean, Alvin Scott and Bayard Forrest, who collectively answer to "the McDowell Street Irregulars."

Though the team won't win any Gold Glove awards—Coach John McLeod's "trapszone" regularly earns technical fouls—this is a dangerous outfit that seems to be peaking at just the right moment. Despite the Suns' speed and savvy, however, their running game came a cropper against Seattle three times before Phoenix finally nailed the Sonics in their last meeting when Davis got 40 points in an overtime thriller. The Western finals may be just as thrilling, but Seattle should do the chilling.

About the possible championship round matching two "Washington" teams—which split four games during the season by a total point differential of one—count it, one—point, the Sonics' Downtown Brown says. "Don't be fooling yourself. You know it all boils down to us against Washington one more time. Both teams have great people all the way through the lineup. They're deeper, but we make up for that with our backcourt. Look, Gus is unstoppable, D.J. is finally D.J., only better. Then you got myself, whom nobody knows how to guard yet. What do I think? I think it will be wild and picturesque all over again."

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UNDAUNTED AND UNHAUNTED

It has taken him six long and trying years, but Denis Potvin finally has rid himself of the ghosts of Bobby Orr and the Montreal Forum

by WILLIAM NACK

The image of Bobby Orr no longer looms over Denis Potvin in the Boston Garden. The Montreal Forum, which used to intimidate Potvin to the point that he could actually feel his arms grow shorter when he played there, is now just another ice house. And the days of confusion, turmoil and alienation, seasons in which he painfully learned the rudiments of humility, teamwork and tact, lie behind him now as certainly as they lay before him six years ago. Forget all the old ghosts that attended him: Denis Potvin has survived himself and finally arrived. Nearing the prime of his career, the 25-year-old defenseman of the New York Islanders has come of age.

He is unequivocally the finest at his position in the NHL today. On a team that doesn't want for talent, Potvin has emerged as its single most important force. In Center Bryan Trottier, the Islanders have the highest scorer in the league—47 goals and 87 assists for 134 points—and in Mike Bossy, who led the league with 69 goals, they have a right wing with a shot quicker than even Guy Lafleur's. But the 6'1, 205-pound Potvin—dominating and controlling play, imposing himself upon the flow of the game at both ends of the ice—is the reason the Islanders beat the Canadiens in three of their four games this year and finished the regular season last Sunday as the No. 1 team in the NHL. He also is the reason, as Stanley Cup play gets under way this week, the Islanders could well put an end to the Canadiens' three-year stranglehold on the Cup.

Few teams have won the Stanley Cup, or even gotten as far as the finals, without a dominant defenseman who can take charge and govern the tempo of a game. Orr took the Boston Bruins to the finals three times. If not for Brad Park, the Bruins would not have made it to the finals the past two years. Larry Robinson was essential in Montreal's last three Stanley Cup victories.

Whether or not the Islanders win the Stanley Cup, this has been Potvin's year. His season of arrival as he scored 31 goals and 70 assists for 101 points, joining Orr as the only other defenseman ever to score more than 100 points.

"When Denis makes up his mind to be the best player on the ice, he is the best player on the ice," says teammate Ed Westfall, who played with Orr for six seasons in Boston. "Denis tends sometimes to lay back a little bit and maybe not put all his effort into it in all times, but when he makes up his mind, he is a master at the fundamentals of the game: he passes, he shoots, he skates and he checks. He just does it all."

Never did he do it all better than on March 22 in the Montreal Forum. Potvin gave a virtuoso performance—rushing the puck up the middle and down the side, headmanning the puck to the forwards to quicken the offensive flow, intercepting passes, checking everything that moved and finally, when the Islanders needed it most, scoring. With the game tied 3-3, Potvin hammered a slap shot past Ken Dryden for what turned out to be the winning goal.

I could see it right away out there, Islanders Coach Al Arbour said of Potvin's performance. "He became commanding. He took charge. Denis now is more commanding than he's ever been. Most of the teams that have won the Stanley Cup have had that big guy back there, like Robinson and Orr, to take charge. Denis is in their class, no doubt about it. He's just starting to take charge and he's going to get better at it."

Potvin's future was not always seen so clearly. There were days, and not too long ago, when he was very young and



living a life alienated from most of the Islanders—alone, confused, depressed, outcast. And there were days when he was struggling on the ice to live up to what had always been predicted for him as a hockey player. He was burdened early with great expectations, and grew up with a vision of himself as broad and encompassing as the rinks on which he saw himself one day transcendent.

At 14, already regarded as a prodigy, Potvin played his first game in the Montreal Forum, before more than 15,000 fans. That year he also learned from

reading newspapers that he was to be the second coming of Orr, who was still working at being the first. The compliment spurred him.

"Denis was a good hockey player at the beginning, but he never saw himself as something special," says his mother Lucille. "But the Orr thing hit him. He knew then that he was better than he thought he was."

It was heady tonic to be 14 and the second Orr. But Potvin soon tired of the comparison. "It was constant," he says. "Anytime I did something in the

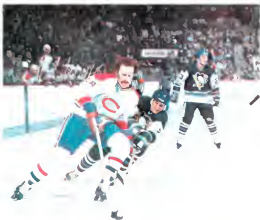
juniors, I heard 'Orr did it . . . Orr did it . . . Orr did it.' It was a heck of a compliment, but after a while you say, 'But I did it . . . I did it!' It was tough. I let it get to me for a long time."

Potvin certainly never did anything on the ice to discourage the comparison. By the time he was 15, the media had made him a public figure, and by the time he was 19—when the Islanders made him the No. 1 choice in the 1973 amateur draft—he was a celebrity, a star. The Islanders had just concluded their first season in the NHL, winning but 12

continued

Although twice voted the NHL's best defenseman, Potvin did not emerge as the New York Islanders' team leader—both on and off the ice—until this season.





Harking back to the days of Orr and Harvey, the Stanley Cup playoffs frequently have served as a showcase for defencemen. Last season Larry Robinson (above) won the Smythe award as the playoffs' MVP after leading Montreal to its third straight Cup

Robinson has had a series of injuries this season and his questionable health is one reason the Canadians may no longer be invincible. Brad Park (bottom) twice has led Boston into the finals, but Park too has been injury-plagued in this, the year of Potvin



of 78 games. Potvin was hailed as the savior who would make them a winner.

"He was a kid," says Westfall. "He was still only 20 years of age, no matter how much better he was than guys who had been playing 15 years and were 35. It was a big adjustment for him. He was under tremendous pressure."

Potvin found trouble early, and it tracked him off and on for almost four years. "I was pretty cocky when I came up," Potvin says. "I'd been a superstar all my life. And I mean, it wasn't my job to keep me happy. People wanted to do that so I could play well. So I figured, 'Why should that change? Why was it that people didn't care anymore whether or not I was happy?'"

They didn't care because, aside from finding Potvin gifted and special as a hockey player, they also perceived him to be selfish, insensitive and tactlessly critical of others. He wanted things done the way he wanted things done.

"When he first came up and would say and do the things he did," says Islanders goalie Glenn Resch, "guys would say, 'Who the hell is that?'"

"Denis had decided, in his eagerness, to try and be mature very quickly," says Westfall. "He alienated himself and, well, some of the toughest critics are not the media but the players themselves. Denis is an aggressive hockey player. He was aggressive in his personality, and that got him into trouble."

Trouble was as easy as icing the puck in those days. Unionsdale, the home of the Islanders, lies about 35 miles east of Manhattan, in the middle of one of the nation's most populous suburbs. Most of the other young Islanders came from small rural communities in western Canada. They adapted easily and readily to suburban life. Denis was a city guy. He grew up within minutes of downtown Ottawa, and favored the museums and lights of Manhattan to the lawns and lamps of Long Island. This was all well and good, of course, until the day he openly praised the cultural virtues of the city and wondered why his fellow Islanders didn't share his enthusiasm. His teammates brooked. He felt more isolated than ever, and relationships became even more strained.

"My interest in the city and the fact that I expressed it made people a little shaky," Potvin says. "I felt like an outcast. Very alone."

Not that his hockey suffered appreciably.

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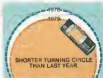
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ciably. While learning and maturing as a defenseman, Potvin grew increasingly productive on offense the first three years—from 17 goals and 37 assists for 54 points in 1973-74 to 21 goals and 55 assists for 76 points in 1974-75 to 31 goals and 67 assists for 98 points in 1975-76. His only bad games, it seemed, came in the Boston Garden, where Orr was playing, and in the Montreal Forum, where Potvin felt he was in another world.

"I grew up looking at the Forum like a shrine," Potvin says. "The Canadiens were a tradition. I was raised with the Canadiens. When I talked about a hockey jersey, it was a Canadian jersey. When it was Wednesday, it was stay-at-home-and-watch-the-game day. And Saturday night it was watch them again. It was a ritual. They were as much a part of my life as eating meat and mashed potatoes. When I went there it was scary. I wasn't playing for them, I was playing against them. I couldn't even handle the puck."

The Orr complex was different, Potvin says, but it had the same effect. "It was an individual thing with Orr," he says. "I grew up looking at him, and seeing what he was doing, and knowing that he was exactly what I wanted to be. I'd lived with this since I was 14. Maybe the head-to-head confrontation, in an uncomfortable surrounding like Boston, was too much. I thought more of the confrontation than I did of the game. I sensed it coming but I couldn't do anything about it. I was afraid, I was shaking, and I kept telling myself that once I get on the ice and get my first hit, everything will be out of the way. But it didn't happen that easy. It was too deep-rooted. I knew I wasn't playing well in Boston and Montreal. I could never understand it. I was playing with my legs and stick rather than my head. Every game I was held back somehow. It's like reaching—and having your arms be too short. The more I worked, the shorter and shorter the arms got. I could never understand it."

As things turned out, it was the matter of Orr that brought Potvin's personality problems with the Islanders to a head and, ultimately, to a resolution. In the fall of 1976, following the Canada Cup games, Potvin wrote an article for *The Canadian*, a Saturday supplement to the *Toronto Star*, in which he praised Orr but insisted that he, Potvin, had outplayed Orr in Canada's 3-1 victory over the Soviet Union and deserved the MVP Award more than Orr, who won it.

Resch, among other Islanders, was aghast. "There was just no reason on earth to say the things that Denis said about Orr," Resch says. "I was so mad at him I could hardly talk to him. It was Orr's last hurrah and all the players knew it. Denny was going to have many more chances."

Wrath descended upon Potvin from everywhere, and old resentments among teammates surfaced.

"I didn't want dissension," Potvin says. "I had confidence in myself. It seemed no one wanted to help me get on the right track, so I had to do it myself. I got myself into that hold, and I worked myself out of it. No help from anybody. My interest in doing it was for the team, because I felt that if there was that kind of dissension, certain guys were going to carry it onto the ice. You can't avoid it."

So, one day that fall of 1976, a few weeks after the Canada Cup, Potvin stood up and faced the Islanders in the dressing room at their practice rink on Long Island.

"Standing up in that room, well, it was something I had a tough time doing," Potvin says. "I could hardly express what I was saying. But I bottled everything to get it out because I knew what I wanted to say."

Which was that he was sorry. "He just poured himself out," says Westfall. "He said, 'I have done some things that made you look bad, mostly made myself look bad, and I'm here now to apologize for anything I have said or done that embarrassed any of you. I'm struggling with the thing. I'm doing my best to correct it. I made my mistakes. I can't be persecuted the rest of my life for something I did three years ago.'"

"What he was saying was, 'Look, I may need a little help, I'm trying like hell, I don't want to make the same mistakes again. I'm very aware of what I've done. I know what it meant to you fellows. I'm going to try to make it up.' " Potvin's apology is regarded as the turning point in the fortunes of the Islanders. "I think it was the beginning of putting our team together," Arbour says.

"It was the cornerstone to building the close, solid team that we have now," says Resch. "Shoot, we all made mistakes. It wasn't only Denny, it was all of us. We were all trying to get our feet on the ground, to create our own identity out

here. I think we were insensitive to one another. I was as guilty as anyone. People would say to me, 'He's only 20. Or 21. Or 22.' I'd say, 'Shoot, that's no excuse.' He's done more than I had done at 25. I was stupid enough to think he should have been 25 when he was 20."

Says Potvin, "I felt as if I had had gallstones taken out. It made such a change, a wonderful difference. Guys I hadn't talked with in two years were coming up and talking to me. It's a world of difference now and it shows. The team is rolling now. There's a care. There's love for each other, I guess. If a guy makes a mistake, I have to feel enough for that guy to go and bust my butt to try and cover for him. The same applies when I make a mistake. I see it happening now, I make a mistake and I look around and two guys are covering for me. That's the way it has to be. It's such a comfortable feeling. You don't want to lose that. It's really the essence behind winning a championship."

Which is what the top-seeded Islanders hope to do in the Stanley Cup playoffs. Since they were launched seven years ago, they have had successively better seasons, winning more and losing less each year. Last season, his fifth with the Islanders, Potvin won his second Norris Trophy as the NHL's best defenseman, and after his third 30-goal season in the last five years—Orr is the only other defenseman ever to score 30 goals—Potvin is a lock to win it again this year, the year "Orr did it . . ." died out and the Forum became just a building on St. Catherine's Street.

Potvin could feel the transformation becoming complete when Referee Bryan Lewis dropped the puck for that game in the Forum on March 22. Potvin says he simply threw off his paralyzing reverence like an old wrap.

"I was tired of it, tired of the mediocre play, bored with it," Potvin says. "I came out of it at the faceoff. I could feel it. I was mad, and not intimidated. The game I played that Thursday night was the first time I ever felt comfortable in the Montreal Forum. It was the first time in six years! At the faceoff I could have screamed. I felt like I could have done anything in that game. It was like being damned cold and jumping into the womb. You were nourished by the good passing, by the excitement, by the good plays, the good hits. And what better time to pull out of it than then, when everything was on the line?"

END





The kid was 13 and running, trying to find a place to hide from the Washington, D.C. police, who were running just as fast and not far behind. He rounded the corner of Georgia and Madison, stopped, surveyed the possibilities and decided on the recreation center to his right. He was lucky. The members of the weight-lifting team who were training in a small corner of the center agreed to hide him.

The group that gave the kid refuge in February 1974 was a collection of neighborhood boys who had been learning how to lift weights for the past three months in a corner of the recreation center. In that time they had been hassled by neighborhood pimps, bruisers who thought there was no sport in lifting weights and local pool sharks who played at the table on the other side of the room. A boy on the run from the cops was the least of their problems. According to the team's coach, Bob Thompson, "The police used to come in and handcuff some of our own guys right as they were getting ready to lift. I'd say, 'Do you mind if he finishes this before you take him away?'" But in three years such inner-city kids would form the core of the only black Olympic-style weight-lifting team in the U.S. competing on an international level—the Crushers Unlimited.

Apart from two blacks—Jim Bradford, who won a silver medal in the heavyweight class at the 1960 Olympics, and heavyweight John Davis, continued

AN UPLIFTING EXPERIENCE

The Crushers, a Washington, D.C. weight-lifting team, have given a bunch of inner-city kids a sense of redeeming purpose

by WILMER AMES

Before joining the Crushers, Tony Sims, 15, now a Junior Olympic champion, was shaping up as a candidate for the D.C. jolt

the 1948 and 1952 gold medalist—and Hawaiian Tommy Kono, light-heavy and heavy-weight Olympic champion in 1952 and 1956, respectively, weight lifting in America has been pretty much a sport for whites living in small towns in states like Rhode Island, Pennsylvania and Illinois. The development of the Crushers, in 70½ black Washington, D.C., from a group of scrawny kids between the ages of 13 and 20, is a phenomenal accomplishment. In five years team members have won two Junior Olympic National championships and set seven Junior Olympic national records. Overall, the Crushers have won more than 15 team awards—at the 1978 Teenage National Weightlifting Championship they were second—and brought home more than 100 individual trophies.

Mark Cameron, a University of Maryland student who is one of the country's top Olympic lifters, says of the Crushers: "They have all of the prejudices of society going against them. They're a pile of city black kids who have succeeded through their own abilities."

The heart of the Crushers are Adrian and Andre Johnson and Tony Sims, members of the team since its inception, and Ron Crawley, who has been a member for 2½ years.

Andre Johnson, 19, weighs 148 pounds and can snatch 209 pounds and jerk 270. He came in fourth in the 1977 Junior Olympics. His brother Adrian, 17, weighs 104 pounds and stands 5' 2". He was the 1977 Washington area 114-pound champion and was seventh, sixth and fifth, respectively, in the last three Junior Olympics. Sims, 18, was the 1977 Junior Olympics champion in the 165-pound class for 16- and 17-year-olds, and has won more than 100 weight-lifting awards. In 1978 he set a Junior Olympic record in the snatch by lifting 253 pounds despite being hampered by a broken toe. Crawley, 20, the 1977 Junior Olympics champion in the 123-pound class for 18- and 19-year-olds, has won more than 80 awards and has never been lower than second in any competition. He holds five Junior Olympic records, all in the 18- and 19-year age group, and finished 12th at the world championships in his class in Athens last June.

Obviously, for these four and the other six regular team members, Crushers Unlimited is more than merely an after-school activity. It is also more than a group of guys lifting weights over their heads. The Crushers are different from most teams—in the way they train, in the way they relate to each other. It is ap-

parent in the applauding and cheering on the edge of the mats during exhibitions, the rap sessions after practice and above all in the exorbitant amount of time spent socializing together, almost to the exclusion of all family life. The Crushers have taken good old American team spirit one step beyond. For these athletes, the team is a brotherhood. Weight lifting is merely the vehicle that brought them together, and for that they have Thompson to thank.

That 41-year-old Bob Thompson should have been such a catalyst might seem highly unlikely. He is white and hails from Danville, Va., where a number of people, including Thompson's father, who has lived there all his life, "don't like a bunch of niggers hanging around the house all day." When Thompson graduated from high school in 1956, he enlisted in the Air Force in order to avoid having to go to work in the local cotton mill or one of the factories like most everyone else. Out of service in 1961 he headed for Washington, D.C., and a job with the D.C. Fire Department. He has been there ever since.

Having been exposed to weight lifting in the service, Thompson lifted competitively from 1961 to 1964 and set the D.C. squat record in 1963. He staged local weight-lifting meets at a YMCA in the Washington area until he got married in 1964, whereupon he dropped out of the sport. But the family he hoped for never arrived and Thompson came to feel that he hadn't been quite ready for marriage. He and his wife were divorced in 1968, and he went back to weight lifting, but this time as a coach.

"I knew I was good with children," he says. "In the neighborhood where I worked I saw many boys who had no fathers, and, since I had no children, I felt I could teach them and give them a better world to relate to. I felt that if I could only show them I cared and teach them how they could express love, I could reach them. I knew I couldn't just walk into some school or see center, I needed a vehicle—and I thought of weight lifting."

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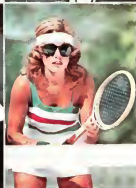
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dance of kids with nothing to do—they can be found hanging out on the corners, on stoops or around the firehouse. A great many of these kids are not so much economically deprived as emotionally deprived, as Thompson realized. One day in January 1974 Thompson asked Michael Screen, one of the kids who used to drop by the firehouse several times a week, if he'd like to learn how to lift weights. Soon Michael was bringing his friends around, and in no time the new weight-lifting team had outgrown Thompson's house. He packed up his weights and his team and moved them to a corner of a small room in the Emery Recreational Center across the street from the firehouse. The ceiling slanted, which made it difficult to lift weights overhead, and the team shared the room with a pool table and about 100 other neighborhood kids. Nevertheless, after two months the group had 10 members and was competing in local contests.

"Emery was a center with a lot of bad, but hard, people around," says Andre Johnson. "It was more of a community thing—with crowds, drunks and all sorts of strange people milling around—than it was a gym."

But plenty of kids came, too. During the five years the Crushers have been in existence several hundred have come and gone, relatively few remaining long enough to become members of what had developed into a first-rate team. But Thompson worked diligently with the basic group. Tony, Andre and Adrian. Toward the end of 1975 Thompson got restless and took off on a five-month trip around the world, flying to Europe, then hitchhiking around India before flying back to Washington. On his return, the only thing he expected to find of the Crushers Unlimited was a set of 200-pound training weights, but working out every day and awaiting his return were Tony, Andre and Adrian.

Early in 1976 Thompson managed to secure a small classroom, about 15' by 30', at Robust Junior High School in northwest Washington, and the D.C. Department of Recreation donated \$1,500 for equipment. The remainder of the money—some \$4,000—needed to convert the classroom into an adequately equipped training room came from Thompson's pocket.

The classroom at Robust became more
converted



Dave Nelson 12 took second in the 104½-pound class at the Montgomery County Teenage Open

Having placed in the last three Junior Olympics, Adrian Johnson is no 104-pound weakling



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he won the Senior Nationals and finished 12th in the world championships.

In June 1976, Ron graduated from vocational school as an auto mechanic. "I would like to work during the day and teach here in the evenings," he says. "There might be a little money involved, but even if there isn't, I'm still going to teach. We're not just a team, we're friends. We're family. It's half-and-half whether I'm closer to the Crushers or to my real family."

The Crusher who has probably been through the most is Tony Sims. He is also the Crusher with the most natural weight-lifting ability—ability that may enable him to participate in the 1980 Olympics.

At 18, Tony is a good-looking, articulate, street-wise kid who stands 6', 165 pounds and can clean and jerk more than 300 pounds about as easily as other men toss an apple in the air. He sports a pierced but unadorned left ear, and has been in and out of trouble since he was 13, when he was first put on probation for stealing cars.

Tony's father isn't home much, it was an older brother who had the most influence over him. "I actually started lifting weights with my brother, who went on to play basketball and football in high school," he says. "But I can't talk to him, can't communicate with him the way I really want to."

Tony joined the Crushers in 1974 and stayed out of trouble for a while, but last year he started backsliding and it seemed there was nothing anyone could do about it, including the Crushers. He quit the team and hung out with another kind of gang.

"We used to do things like set up our own bumper cars with real cars," he says. "I started stealing because I wasn't getting enough out of weight lifting anymore and I wanted a car to ride around in—a little responsibility."

Thompson sums up the Crushers' view of Tony. "He was like an idol to them, an older brother. Tony was here almost from the start, and everybody looked up to him. When they found out he was stealing cars it was a shock. Some of the boys just couldn't understand it. And the trouble with Tony hurt me. It was an unsaid thing, but it ripped me up and I think it ripped the Crushers up. He had let us down."

And then one day Tony found him-

self trapped in the middle of a side street in Montgomery County, Md., with two very scared young ladies sitting beside him in the front seat of a stolen car, police cars blocking both entrances to the street and policemen standing behind those cars with drawn guns.

The offense was grand larceny. However, Tony was a minor, it was his first arrest in Maryland, and the Montgomery police department was sympathetic. It decided not to report the matter to the Washington police if Tony promised that he would stay out of trouble for the next six months.

The only thing Tony still seemed to have at that point was the Crushers—if they would take him back.

"He was so scared, he was sweating when he came to see me," Thompson says. "He told me he used to ride by the gym but was too ashamed to come in. Tony's not a mean kid, or a bad kid, he was just misdirected."

"I'm sure he felt that he had let the Crushers down. But after it was all over, the group said they knew he could do it—get himself back together."

But it was up to Tony to face them. One day at the end of practice he showed up at the gym, stood in the middle of the floor and said quietly, "I would like to apologize for what I did. I'm sorry. I'd like another chance."

No one said anything. Finally, one by one, the Crushers filed by and silently shook his hand. The prodigal son was welcomed home, though not without reservations. Adrian shook Tony's hand, but left the gym muttering, "I don't want to be around him anymore." (He later changed his mind.)

"Tony was headed for some bad news," Thompson says. "If it hadn't been for the Crushers, he'd be in the can right now. He has a real need for the team. With Andre and Adrian it was a little different. They were headed in the right direction, they just needed a father figure, and I gave them that. Ron had his head together when he came here."

"But I have gotten just as much out of the Crushers as Tony or anyone. I need the program as much as they need it. I've gotten my head together, too. I owe everything I've got to them."

The Crushers put on free exhibitions anywhere in the Washington/Virginia/Maryland area that will let them lay down their mats. During the last two



Sims has a chance at the U.S. Olympic team

years they have put more than 70,000 miles on the fire-engine-red 1974 Dodge van that has become their mobile home, while traveling to Wheaton, Md. and as far away as Mexico.

People sometimes refer to the team as Bob Thompson's Crushers, but they are the Crushers, plus Bob Thompson—friendly, sensitive and together. On a Friday night before an exhibition they will ride by the Wheaton Mall in Maryland and sit in the parking lot, staring up at the bright sign advertising an exhibition by THE CRUSHERS UNLIMITED—AN OLYMPIC WEIGHT-LIFTING TEAM. Or, when no activities are planned, they will go bike riding or spend a Saturday afternoon go-karting and eating pizza at Shakey's, and end up spending the night at Thompson's house.

Before an exhibition, the team concentrates on the members who are lifting that day, massaging their legs and arms, rubbing down their backs. When someone completes a difficult lift, the rest of the Crushers stand cheering and shouting, showing team spirit in what is traditionally an individual sport. "Lifting the weights on the platform is up to you," Tony says, "but the team keeps you going. What makes us stay together is we love everybody. The Crushers are getting us prepared for the world." **END**

Not enough pop to come out on top

Angel Frank Tanana's "comeback" was a mixture of fastballs and meatballs

He dug a little trench on the mound of the Seattle Kingdome with his left foot, pawing the earth with the comical ferocity of a terrier. But when he turned to confront the first batter of the 1979

season, his ordinarily sunny visage was beclouded with earnestness. Frank Tanana, pitching the opening game for the California Angels last week, was starting his comeback.

Comeback? Frank Tanana? Why. Tanana won 18 games last season and led the Angels in shutouts, with four, and in innings pitched, with 239. Is that a record requiring a comeback? Tanana thinks so. For one thing, the record was deceptive. He won only six games after the All-Star break and his earned run average of 3.65 was the highest and his strikeouts total of 137 the lowest of a career that, though brilliant, has not yet approached its possibilities.

Before last season, the lefthanded Tanana had a fastball that approximated the sonic boomers thrown by teammate Nolan Ryan and a crackling curve that may have been the sharpest in baseball. He had neither during the last few months of the 1978 season, which made his 18-12 performance all the more remarkable. Where once Tanana overpowered hitters, striking out an average of 229 a season from 1974 through 1977, last year he deceived them, changing the speed of his pitches from not-very-fast to awfully-slow. At age 25 he had become a canny old-timer, surviving on guile, not power. It is a credit to his maturity that he adjusted so well.

"I enjoyed the challenge of changing style," he says now. "I had to give my fastball the illusion of being quicker than it was. That's the key to pitching, anyway. You must do something to make the hitter feel uncomfortable. But anybody who saw me pitch last year knew that something was wrong."

Certainly his opponents did. Word spread quickly through the American League that Tanana could be had. And had he was in seven of his last 11 decisions.

Tanana has been troubled throughout his career by a variety of seemingly minor ailments in his pitching arm. The most severe of these was a siege of tendinitis that beset him midway through 1977, a season that until then had been nothing short of sensational. He had won 10 of his first 12 decisions, five by shutouts, and pitched 14 consecutive complete games before he was hurt. He missed the last three weeks of the season but still finished with a league-leading 2.54 ERA, a 15-9 record and 205 strikeouts in 241 innings. As in the past, proved the only cure for his aching elbow. The arm was healthy enough at the start of last season, but the memory of the pain was so abiding that Tanana began to favor it subconsciously. He gradually changed his pitching motion to ease the pain, both real and imagined.

"I developed a fear of really throwing," he says. "I had to constantly remind myself to come on top, to throw overhand. I knew the ball didn't have that much life. I was throwing lower than I should have."

Warren Spahn, who knows a little about pitching lefthanded, observed this spring how drastically Tanana had altered his delivery. Spahn, the Angels' minor league pitching instructor, saw that Tanana was not only throwing almost sidearm, but that he was also failing to snap his wrist with the old authority. The fireballing Tanana whom Spahn remembered could generate 95-mph fastballs and 90-mph curves off that powerful flick. The Tanana he now saw was pushing the ball like a shotputter. Originally assigned to help Tanana with his move to first base, Spahn switched his attention to Tanana's move to home plate. It was not an easy chore because, Tanana admits, "It's hard breaking the habits of a year and a half."

Last Wednesday, against the Mariners, a team he had beaten five times without a loss in his career, Tanana exhibited



Tanana gave up five runs and, finally, the ball to Mark Clear



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flashes of his old form, but the results were not encouraging. The Mariners, scarcely celebrated for their prowess as sluggers, came out swinging against a pitcher they assumed, perhaps correctly, was the old new Tanana, not the new old Tanana. Julio Cruz lofted the first pitch of the season into the glove of Centerfielder Rick Miller, and Bill Stein bounced the second into the hole between short and third for an infield single. The third delivery, to Dan Meyer, was a fine sharp-breaking curve on the outside corner for a strike. But Meyer lined the next pitch to left for a single. Tanana survived the inning without further incident. He was not so fortunate in the second, when Seattle Catcher Larry Cox, possessor of four career home runs, popped a high fastball into the nearby leftfield seats for a two-run homer.

Tanana looked fast and sharp in the third, retiring the side in order, but in the fourth, Designated Hitter Willie Horton led off with a homer into rightfield off an outside fastball. In the sixth, Tanana inconvenienced himself by throwing wildly to first on Meyer's bouncer to the mound. Leon Roberts followed with a two-run homer to left. Horton then singled up the middle but was erased on a double play. Finally Tom Paciorek singled, and Manager Jim Fregosi replaced Tanana with rookie Mark Clear. There was no further scoring, Seattle winning 5-4. Tanana had gone 5½ innings and had given up five runs and nine hits, three of them homers. He had struck out four—a modestly good sign—walked no one and committed both an error and a balk.

Mediocre as it had been, Tanana's performance was masterful in comparison with Ryan's in the second game of the season. Ryan is coming back from a 1978 hamstring pull and rib separation; in just an inning and a third, he gave up seven runs to the Mariners. It was a far cry from 1977 when Tanana and Ryan pitched consecutive shutouts in the first two games ever played in the Kingdome. And it was a disappointing start for the Angels, who, with new batting punch in the persons of Rod Carew and Dan Ford, are counting on their two pitching aces to lead them to a long-sought division championship. Now the Angels, who have traditionally been long on pitching and short on hitting, may find that their circumstances are suddenly—and disastrously—reversed.

Tanana, for one, was not about to de-

clare a full-scale emergency. The three home runs, he decided, would have been outs in most major league ball parks. The Kingdome's fences are alluringly close—31.6 feet down the lines and allegedly 36.5 feet up the power alleys—and none of the homers was a Ruthian swat. The last, by Roberts, was actually hit off the fists, said Tanana. Still, he conceded, "You've got to pitch the way the ball park is structured. This is the wrong place to be giving up fly balls."

This tactical error aside, Tanana was delighted by the new-old "pop" of his fastballs. "I felt I threw the ball well," he said after the game. "I'm more advanced than I was last year. For this early in the season, this was encouraging. And remember, this is just one game of many." And, for a young man in search of his old self, one to forget.

THE WEEK

(April 4-7)

by JIM KAPLAN

NL EAST

Angels Ryan and Tanana weren't the only big-name players crying. Among the beaten were Tom Seaver, Burt Hooton, Phil Niekro, Ron Guidry, Ed Figueroa, Mike Torrez, Steve Carlton and Bert Blyleven, and the Yankees, Reds and Phillies all were winless. Of the losers, the Phillies looked the worst. They were twice beaten—and outmaneuvered—by St. Louis. In the first game, an 8-1 Cardinal win, Ken Ritz of St. Louis hit a bases-loaded double to shallow left against an outfield that was playing deep. In the second, a 3-2 Card victory, he drove in the winning run with a ninth-inning single into the left-center gap, slapping the ball over a charging infield that was expecting a bunt. "He isn't hitting where our scouting reports say he usually hits," mumbled Philadelphia Manager Danny Ozark.

There was sloppy play aplenty in Pittsburgh. The Pirates, who admit they must improve their 12th-ranked defense to win the division, made five errors in a 3-2 opening-day loss to Montreal. The next night the Pirates committed four more but won 7-6 when the Expos made two mistakes on one play. Montreal's Elias Sosa had been given a 6-5 lead to protect in the ninth, but with two outs and two men on he fielded Willie Stargell's grounder and bounced a throw into rightfield. Matt Alexander scored the tying run from third, and the irrepressible Dave Parker, who had his face crumpled in a similar collision last season and still wears protective headgear, came all the way around from first knocking the ball out of Catcher

continued

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Gary Carter's mott as he scored the winning run. Afterward, Parker claimed Carter had tried to hurt him by pouncing on him, shun guards first. Carter, who said he was merely trying to control the relay throw, indignantly replied, "Tell Parker to take off his helmet, and I'll run the ball down his throat."

The Cubs are belittling themselves as "much improved," but that may be just so much hoopery. After all, Chicago has been reduced to putting Ken Holtzman, whose last big year was 1975, in the No. 2 spot in the rotation. And to busy the spirits of Bobby Murcer, who has been booed by the fans and derided by the Chicago press, his teammates elected him the Cubs' captain. Holtzman was a loser, and Murcer, who was 1 for 7 and mis-payed a fly, was a goat as the Cubs dropped their first two to New York 10-6 and 9-4. Lee Mazzilli and newly acquired Richie Hebner each went 5 for 9 to pace the Mets' revamped offense.

NY 2-0 ST. L. 2-0 MONT 3-1
PIT 1-1 CHIC 2-0 PHIL 0-2

NL WEST Even for a no-hitter, Ken Forsch's 6-0 conquest of Atlanta was something special. Not only was it the earliest in baseball history—Ed Coates threw one on April 14, 1917—but it also made Forsch half of the game's only no-hitter brother combination. Last year Ken's no-hitter brother, Bob, of the Cardinals, held the Phillies hitless. Moreover, Forsch wasn't even supposed to start, much less pitch effectively. The previous day he had been hospitalized with hives in his left elbow, the result of an insect bite in spring training. Indeed the no-hitter was downright hair-raising. "My hair was standing on end in the ninth inning," said Astro Shortstop Craig Reynolds. "My cap was four feet above my head."

The Giants whipped the Reds 11-5, 7-2, 4-2, blasting Tom Seaver for seven runs in 1½ innings and making all San Franciscans happy, even those who argue whether Willie McCovey or Mike Hogue should start at first. In the 7-2 win, Hogue tied the score with a homer, and McCovey set up the go-ahead runs with a pinch double. The Reds had nothing but embarrassments. Pete Rose's replacements at third, Rick Auerbach and Ray Knight, played sloppily, and reliever Pedro Borbon was suspended by the team for a regular-season game when he refused to pitch in Cincy's last exhibition.

The Dodgers were happy with Andy Messersmith's first win in almost two years—a 5-2 victory over San Diego—but were also troubled by ace reliever Terry Forster's disabling arm ailment.

Gaylord Perry, the 40-year-old slogger for San Diego, had looked his age in spring training, when he was unable to throw an effective fastball. But came the opener, he rejuvined the first 15 batters he faced, lasted eight in-

nings and beat the Dodgers 4-3. When Perry blew a fastball by Steve Garvey in the second inning, Catcher Gene Tenace called out, "It that really you?" The Braves, unfortunately, were really themselves. As usual, Phil Niekro threw a splendid opener, allowing just three hits, but lost 2-1 to the Astros. The Braves have lost their last eight openers, and Niekro all five of his. Shortstop Jerry Royster, given a \$100,000 bonus for his fine play in 1978, was benched after finishing the spring with a .230 average.

SF 3-0 HOUS 2-0 LA 2-1
SD 1-2 ATL 0-2 CIN 0-3

AL EAST Opening Day is always a gala occasion in cricramed Baltimore, accompanied as it is by rallies, poetry and front-page stories and editorials in the local papers. The opener was all the more noteworthy in 1979, because Earl Weaver was one game shy of his 1,000th win as Orioles manager, and Third Baseman Doug DeCinces was two games away from tying the major league record for consecutive games in which he had an RBI. Those were personal concerns. Of import to everybody was

PLAYER OF THE WEEK

KEN FORSCH The 32-year-old Astro right-hander threw the earliest—April 7—no-hitter in baseball history. While beating the Braves 6-0, he allowed only two runners to reach base, both getting to first on walks.

the memory of 1978, when the Orioles lost their first five games and never caught the contenders.

This remembrance was quickly erased as the Birds beat the White Sox 5-3. DeCinces hit in his 22nd game in a row—dating back to Sept. 8, 1978—and drove in a run in his 11th straight. Hospitable Baltimore even provided some Chicago-style weather to make the Sox feel at home. Alas, the Chicagoans were blown out. In 40° temperature and 40-mph gusts that transformed the leftfield corner into an eddy of cups and hot-dog wrappers, the Sox made three errors and misplayed two pop-ups, while the Orioles were flawless behind Jim Palmer, who threw fastballs on 117 of 123 pitches and allowed only three hits. The next afternoon DeCinces was shut down, but the Orioles won again, 6-3.

Wind, cold and snow twice canceled the opener in Detroit. When the game was played two days late, Texas canceled the Tigers 8-2. In other discomfiting news, Tiger fans threw bottles at bobbling Centerfielder Ron LeFlore, and contract talks between the front office and Rusty Staub, assigned and non-playing, remained at an impasse. Toronto won't foolish enough to open in frigid Canada, but the Blue Jays were scarcely warmed by 11-2 and

7-4 losses in Kansas City, Milwaukee traveled to New York and replayed an old tape. The Brewers, who have owned the Yankees in early-season games in recent years, broke up Ron Gaudry's 5½-inning perfect game with a four-run sixth. Mike Caldwell, who finished second to Guidry in the 1978 Cy Young Award balloting and beat the Yanks three out of four times last season, coasted to a 5-1 victory. The next day the Brewers won 4-3 after Bob McClure struck out Reggie Jackson with the bases loaded.

All the Red Sox injury problems of spring were forgotten—temporarily—as Boston beat Cleveland 7-1. Dennis Eckenley, fresh from signing a five-year, \$2.8 million contract, pitched seven strong innings, and Jim Rice, Fred Lynn and Dwight Evans homered. But two days later the Sox, who will play indefinitely without injured regulars Carlton Fisk and Butch Hobson, were one-hit by Rick Waits 3-0.

BALT 2-0 MIL 2-0 BOS 1-1 CLEV 5-1
DET 0-1 NY 0-2 TOR 0-2

AL WEST While Seattle (2-1) and California (1-2) traded wins, Minnesota was delighted with trades of its own. Ron Jackson, who came in a deal with the Angels, went 2 for 4 in a 5-3 win over Oakland, and another trade, Ken Landrum, made a driving catch to save a 3-1, 12-inning victory over the A's the following day. They helped Dave Goltz to his first victory ever in April and Mike Marshall to a win and a save. Oakland had no promotion, advertising or radio contract going into its opener. It wasn't until the next day that owner Charlie Finley made a deal with a 5,000-watt San Jose station to broadcast A's games. Oaklanders and San Franciscans can pick up the station at night—sometimes.

Despite winning its only game, Texas had cause for concern. Jim Malack, the Rangers' best pitcher last year, felt a "crinkle" in his arm when he threw down a noun bag several days before the season began, apparently stirring up some bone chips that made his elbow ache. "I'm scared bleesless," he said after being unable to start the opener. White Sox Pitcher Lerrin LaGrou was so scared after hitting Orioles Gary Roenicke in the face with a fastball that he threw a down-the-middle pitch to Rick Dempsey, who smashed a two-run double to win the game.

Kansas City Pitcher Dennis Leonard, concerned he repeat his 3-8 start of 1978, beat Toronto 11-2. Unfortunately, few of the home folk saw him finish up. When K.C. poured across nine runs in the second inning, there was a mass exodus from Royals Stadium, where the wind-chill factor made it seem as if the temperature were 2°.

KC 2-0 MINN 2-0 TEX 1-0 SEA 2-1
CAL 1-2 CHIC 2-0 OAK 0-2



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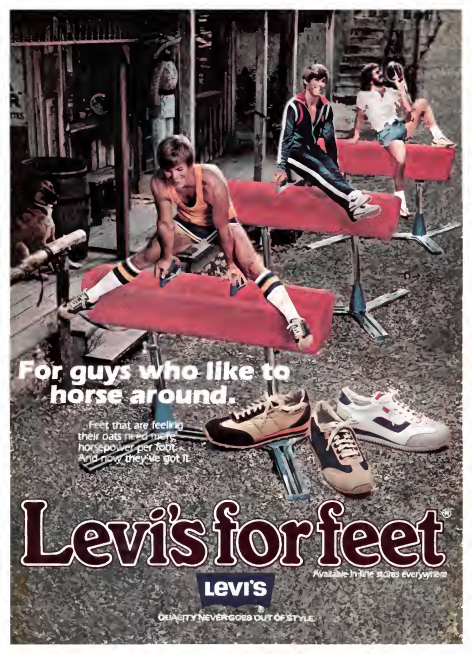


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To the uninitiated, a lacrosse faceoff gives the appearance of a crude physical battle—two opposing players, their sticks pressed together at ground level, grunting and groaning over a ball that has been placed between their nets. To the aficionado, on the other hand, the faceoff is an art form complete with its own esoterica—mysterious things such as the rake and the clamp.

Traditionally, the faceoff puts the ball back in play following each goal and at the start of each quarter. But last May, in a move that caught the lacrosse world with its sticks down, the NCAA rules committee voted to eliminate faceoffs after goals. The team scored upon would simply be given the ball. No more pushing or shoving required. What's more, the team would get the ball not near its own goal, but right out there in midfield where it could launch an all-out attack on the opponent's goal. The main idea was to shorten the overall time it takes to play a game.

How has this new rule been received? Well, at the moment it couldn't win a popularity contest against radioactive fallout. Club teams, which accommodate lacrosse players after their college days, and high schools have refused to adopt it. College coaches evidenced their feelings in December by pleading with the NCAA committee to revoke the rule change. The committee refused.

Now the fans have spoken. Last Saturday afternoon in Baltimore, while undefeated and No. 1-ranked Johns Hopkins was rolling to a 13-8 win over previously unbeaten Virginia, a small contingent of Johns Hopkins fans decided it was time to make a comment. After each Hopkins score the greater part of the partisan crowd would count off the number of Blue Jay goals. "One two... three... four..." and greedily add, "We want more." At that point the smaller group would quickly holler, "Faceoffs."

"We've taken away the flow of lacrosse, the passing on the run, which was the good thing about the sport," says Hopkins Coach Henry Caccione.

While the ruling seems to have succeeded in shortening the games, it has



To specialists like Johns Hopkins' Ned Radebaugh (right) the faceoff is a piece of athletic art

Facing a dilemma

The no-faceoff rule has shortened the game but speeded up the controversy

not speeded up their pace. With the no-faceoff rule automatically putting one team on offense after every goal, coaches are increasingly substituting defensive or offensive specialists for the old-style madfiddlers who had been capable of playing both ends of the field. Those madfiddlers dictated a fast-paced game by forcing turnovers on defense and then executing fast breaks on offense.

"The lacrosse faceoff was unique," says Maryland Coach Bud Beardmore. He agrees with Cornell Coach Richie Moran, who says, "A good faceoff man could start fast breaks, and fast breaks

are the beauty of the game." Last year Maryland scored 47 times within 25 seconds of a faceoff. That brings up another coaching complaint. Without a chance to get the ball right back on a faceoff, how can a team trailing by a few goals hope to come back late in a game?

An example of the way the new rule has altered play arose late in the first quarter last Saturday. Cavalier Goalie Brian Gregory made a good save, but instead of looking for a fast break he simply held the ball while Virginia substituted offensive specialists. When they were finally in place, it took the Cavaliers just a few seconds and four quick passes to move the ball the length of the field and score. It was a beautiful display of passing, but only for those in the crowd who hadn't wandered off for a hot dog while Gregory was stalling.

Other coaches hasten to point out the strategic importance of the faceoff. On the day after the NCAA decision was announced last May, Blue Jay freshman Ned Radebaugh controlled 20 of 22 faceoffs to lead Hopkins to a 13-8

continued

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LACROSSE continued

upset of Cornell in the national championship. Facing off was all Radebaugh did that day.

In the case of the faceoff, absence indeed seems to have made the heart grow fonder. The truth is that the faceoff disappeared because of the coaches, not in spite of them. The NCAA committee originally acted on the recommendation of the rules and equipment committee of the United States Intercollegiate Lacrosse Association. The USILA group had developed its recommendations from responses to questionnaires sent to coaches last spring. In recent years, games had been dragging on for about 2½ hours. Coaches were asked if they wanted to do away with the faceoff and, if so, where did they want to put the ball into play?

Of the total number queried, 77% responded, and 62% of those, or approximately 48% of the total, recommended doing away with the faceoff. There was no clear-cut majority on the subject of where to put the ball in play, although the area behind the goal got the most votes and midfield the fewest. In a spirit of compromise, the USILA committee recommended the restraining line. The NCAA committee, fearing that weaker teams might not be able to clear the ball out of the shadow of their own goal, opted for midfield. "If the people who voted against the faceoff had known where the ball was going to be placed, most of them wouldn't have voted the way they did," says Beardmore.

Virginia Coach Jim Adams, who was chairman of the NCAA committee, hopes that speeding up the game will make lacrosse "more packageable for TV." But television may be a pipe dream. A planned local telecast of last Saturday's Hopkins-Virginia game was canceled, the problem was not lack of faceoff but lack of television interest in the game.

The day after the Blue Jays' win, the USILA rules and equipment committee gathered at Johns Hopkins to plan the questionnaire it will send out this year concerning rules changes for 1980. Many lacrosse observers are already predicting that the results of that poll will mandate the return of the faceoff. Whatever the outcome, the faceoff fiasco has guaranteed one positive step. "In the past when the USILA questionnaire was sent out, no one paid much attention to it," Ciccarone said last week. "You can bet that won't be the case this year." **END**

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It wasn't the Year of the Crab or the Snake or even, thank Heaven, the Frozen Momentum, but fearless Harvard rowed fiercely to beat everybody at San Diego

There is a point at which joy, deeply felt, can verge on mania, but there are far better places for one to experience that transcendent emotion than in an exquisitely unstable eight-oared racing shell. But Harvard varsity's oarsmen were beyond all reason last week. One stood swaying on his seat at the San Diego Crew Classic after the 2,000-meter Copley Cup for varsity heavyweight eights rolling his eyes, waving his arms and screaming at his teammates, over and over, "Oh, you gods! Oh, you gods!" Others were smashing wildly at the waters of Mission Bay with clenched fists, emitting glad wordless cries, possibly convinced, in the grip of their mania, that they could influence the current. This did not seem farfetched, because the shell gave no signs of capsizing.

But before the Harvards stepped over-

board, to walk across the water to shore, they calmed down enough to row there. Later they were able to explain their reaction to winning the day's big race, the season's first major test of transcontinental rowing power.

To fully appreciate Harvard's outburst, one has to know a bit of Harvard history, how a rowing dynasty fell on bad times last year, with a loss here at San Diego, then two more later in the season. Now the Harvard four oar, Charlie Alekruze Jr., was saying, "We were really hungry today. You don't know what it's like to lose, until you've lost for Harvard. Everyone always talks about the winner of a race. But if Harvard loses, then everyone talks about that. So we had a score to settle."

"We won in an old, borrowed boat," said Gordie Gardiner, the stroke. "Don't

forget about that. We didn't even have a theme, like some other Harvard crews. No Year of the Crab, no Year of the Snake, no Smooth and Rude. We just went out and worked hard and won."

And it was a boat full of friends, six of them, now seniors. "A together boat," one called it, "technically and emotionally, and we wanted to win so badly."

They did it by open water over California, with Wisconsin another three quarters of a length back, Penn the same distance behind Wisconsin, and Brown and Navy moving up the rear. Harvard had started bringing strongly at 400 meters, with Coxswain Harry You shouting, "O.K., no one's moving on us now." They passed Wisconsin at 650 to go, Cal at about 750 and inexorably moved away. Two Oar Tim McGee said later, "I said to myself, 'This crew's so damned solid and strong I can't believe it. I've been with fast crews before, but I've never felt anything like that.'"

"A little sweet revenge," said a grinning Warren Perkins, the six oar, summing it all up. But that did not fully explain the wild demonstration Harvard put on when the race was over, which

continued



The Crimson's open-water victory over California was doubly sweet because no one had considered them a factor—or even a dark horse



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couldn't be separated from the atmosphere of the most colorful and zany crew classic in the seven-year history of the event. Simply put, there were four crews everyone at San Diego was talking about before the race, and Harvard was not one of them: to lose was one thing, but to be ignored...

Brown, for example, was called "the dark horse" at least 96 times by TV and newspaper reporters, and when Brown Coach Vic Michelson, a World War II PT-boat skipper, took his old commanding officer along during a workout, the CO "saw something," as he put it, a flaw in the Brown boat. Asked about it, Michelson replied, "Ha, ha. I'd rather not comment." Brown, a dark horse?

And then there was Cal. Word got out that its crew had higher ergometer scores than the U.S. national team, and Cal Coach Steve Gladstone, no braggart, was calling his bunch "the best crew I've ever had." His orders, as they headed south, were, "Think of yourself as hunters, not prey." Crew is a sport of considerable gentility, but the day before racing began, a 6' 4" Cal man—that was Cal's average height—was announcing, "The hunters are here, and the prey is on the run."

For intrigue and suspense there were Wisconsin and Penn. Each would be accepting delivery at San Diego of a radically designed new shell, made of DuPont Kevlar and costing \$7,800. The new boats, built by California mechanical engineer Merritt Robinson, weighed an astonishingly light 180 pounds, contrasted with 265 to 325 pounds for the other boats at the crew classic. Only one Robinson had ever been rowed in a race—by a Harvard crew that finished seventh at last fall's Head of the Charles Regatta. Harvard owns that shell, though it has used it little since the Head, and it does not bring its own boats to San Diego, anyway. And on the eve of the regatta Harvard had no reason to regret that policy. The new boats seemed to be falling apart; foot stretchers in each one had fractured under the strain of pre-race workouts, and the Penn boat had a crack in one gunwale. But Robinson was making emergency repairs with stainless-steel tubing purchased at a local hardware store, and that night a friend, feeling badly for him, asked, "Would you have any serious objection to Penn or Wisconsin winning its heat tomorrow?"

Robinson replied, "I'm looking forward to it." The next morning, when

Wisconsin won and Penn finished second in their six-boat heat, Robinson was beaming and Penn Coach Ted Nash was saying, "You're looking at a whole new generation of boats. This is like a baby being born."

How had Wisconsin and Penn done it? Wisconsin was undeniably out of shape, its lake back home still frozen, its campus under snow; the Budgers, famous for conditioning, had rowed a few miles among ice floes and had not run 20 miles since November. Randy Jablonic, Wisconsin's irrepressible coach, said, "Every morning we get up and make offerings to Bimbo the Polar Bear." And Penn had lost seven seniors from last year's crew, enabling Nash to call this a "typical rebuilding year." Were the new boats that good? Would the face of the sport be changed overnight?

Brown, becoming a darker horse by the hour, beat out Washington, the colossus of West Coast rowing, for third in that heat, producing an even bigger shocker. Beforehand, Washington Coach Dick Erickson had said unconcernedly, "We'll be in the finals." Now, slightly bewildered, he croaked, "We crashed."

For its own part, Harvard went on to win its heat, with Cal second and Navy third, and the stage was set for the big race that afternoon. There would be two space-age boats, a group of 6' 4" hunters searching for prey, a horse (now jet black and under the tutelage of two PT-boat skippers) and Navy—all vs. Harvard, the smallest crew in the competition, racing in a borrowed, old boat.

Two days earlier, Harvard Coach Harry Parker had told a reporter, "We're not ready to race. A couple of weeks from now I'd be sure, but we haven't done enough work at racing cadences, so it will be touch and go. We may have a good race and we may not." It seemed a startling admission; after all, Parker had brought his crew all the way to San Diego. Now, before the race, he spoke briefly to his men. "Go out as hard as you can, right after you settle down, and freeze the momentum of the other crews." And, of course, they did.

Parker is famous for making a few words go a long way. Last year, after his oarsmen had finished second at the Eastern Sprints and later lost to Navy, he spoke to them as they got ready for Yale. "He didn't dwell on our failures," said Altekruze. "He simply said, 'Just dare to

do your best,' and those words stayed with me. I was waiting to hear them again this year, but they didn't come. And I guess I didn't need them."

Altekruze said, "Harry lets you go through all the thinking processes on your own. He's rarely explicit. The information is never pushed on you, but somehow he still imparts what you need for a good hard race. He plants it in your mind and it starts to grow. He makes you think, or maybe he lets you think, and you come out a better oarsman for it, and a better person, too."

In February, as a new school term began, Parker called a meeting. He told everyone that all the crews on the schedule would be tough and that his men would have to work very hard, because they would not be overpowering this year. "They'll be out to get us," he said, "but we're going to row right through them and freeze their momentum." Mercifully, the Year of the Frozen Momentum never caught on as a theme.

Two days before the San Diego race Parker was conducting a workout on Mission Bay. Earlier in the week, on the plane west, Stroke Gordie Gardiner had spoken to him about his form at the starts of races; Gardiner said he felt he was doing something wrong. Now on the Bay, Parker responded "Gordie," he called out, "shoulders all the way back." Now Parker said, "O.K., 10 strokes, let's go. Be quick and solid now. Gordie, keep your length. You've got to be careful of those high strokes."

Throughout the workout Parker hardly spoke to anyone but Gardiner, though he delivered no speeches. Once he said, "Gordie, you tend to be too quick with the legs." The next night, when he came off the water, Gardiner said, "I've suddenly discovered what I was doing wrong. I wasn't laying back enough. I think a lot of it was tightness in the shoulders. Now I've started getting a little more length, and it's just great."

The next afternoon he got into his stroke seat and helped freeze the momentum of Cal, Wisconsin, Penn, Brown and Navy. Later, after Gardiner had beat away at Mission Bay with his fists, he was asked, "Would Harry have criticized your starts today?" and the stroke replied, "I very much doubt it." Then he went off to do what young Harvard oarsmen are supposed to do after such days—drink beer, talk about Harry Parker and dream of dynasties.

END



Keith Taft, a devout Baptist, and Ken Uston, a high-living ex-stockbroker, blackjacked Vegas casinos for a small fortune with the help of a computer

THE ODDS COUPLE

BY RAY KENNEDY

If life is a game of chance, then Keith Taft is an ace in the hole and Ken Uston is the joker. Both play blackjack but the former is a deceptive force, undetected, unknown; the latter is onstage, in costume and going for the elbow to the ribs. Indeed, shuffled any which way, the odds that two so dissimilar men would meet and team up for a caper that divested the Nevada casinos

of \$130,000 in one fell swoop must be a trillion to 1.

Consider the contrasts. Keith Taft is 45, a self-described rube who was raised in the remote wilds of Cut Bank, Mont. He is a deeply religious Baptist, a director of church choirs and partakes not of the cursed weed or demon drink. Staunch family man, low-key, straight-arrow all the way.

Then there is Ken Uston. He would rather split 5s than reveal that he is 45, a disclosure he feels might somehow detract from "my basically hedonistic life-style." A Phi Beta Kappa who majored in economics at Yale, a graduate of the Harvard Business School and a former stockbroker, he is brash, flamboyant and as polygonal as the mirrors over the circular bed in his Las Vegas bachelor pad.

In short, Taft and Uston are the original odd couple, the Oscar Madison and Felix Unger of the green-felt jungle.

The one common trait that ultimately drew them together is a burning urge to escape the shackles of the corporate world. The extent to which they have succeeded is evidenced by their freedom-now reveries. Most often, like schoolboys mooning over their first kiss, both men are given to vividly recalling the tingling moment when they were first smitten by Dame Fortune.

For Keith Taft, a self-taught computer engineer now living in Sunnyvale, Calif., the romance began innocently enough on a weekend outing to Reno in the family camper. Gambling was not on the agenda. God forbid! Of a Sunday, Taft, his wife Dorothy and their four children are more accustomed to performing religious music in hospitals and old-folks homes, and for them Reno was strictly a look-but-don't-touch tour.

Then temptation struck. Upon leaving an exhibit of antique cars, Taft was given a "lucky buck" token that was good for a dollar's worth of play at Harrah's Club. As uneasy as a nun peering into a pool hall, he cased the casino and then, succumbing to the come-on, ventured inside. Though he felt like a "complete turkey," he was fascinated by the glitter and heavy action, particularly at the tables of

continued

Taft (left) practiced at casinos for months, getting the computer David warmed up for the big coup, while Uston perfected counting in his hotel room.



fering a beguiling little game called blackjack, or 21. Unfamiliar with the rules, he asked a bystander to please explain.

Picture cards count as 10 points, he was told. Aces are either one or 11. All other cards are counted at face value. To begin, the dealer and the players receive two cards apiece. The player then has the option to stand pat or "take a hit," that is, draw one or more additional cards. The object is to achieve a total of 21 points—the perfect hand—or come closer to that sum than the dealer does. If either the player or the dealer exceeds 21, he "busts," or loses. If the player draws an ace and a 10-value card on the first two cards dealt, that is a "natural," or blackjack, and it pays 3 for 2.

Simple enough, Taft thought, and with heart racing he sat down at one of the kidney-shaped tables and took the lucky-buck plunge. On the first deal he drew a pair of 10s and won. On the second hand the dealer busted, and he pocketed another dollar. And on the third hand—blackjack! "I was so excited," Taft recalls, "that I took my \$3.50 killing and ran."

But the hook was set. On the five-hour drive home, his mind juggling equations like a UNIVAC in overdrive, Taft speculated that by keeping track of all the cards that were dealt, he might be able to devise a mathematical system that would tip the odds in his favor. "Generally," he says, "the problem required the kind of technology that I dealt with in my work." In fact, he thought, how much easier, faster and more accurate it would be to feed the data to a computer and let it calculate the best play. Of course, he reasoned, the casinos would never permit him to plunk a portable computer down on their blackjack tables. But what if...?

That was 10 years ago. Last January, after his daily half-hour session of Bible reading and prayer, Taft was back at the blackjack tables in Reno. Only this time he was a shark in turkey's guise. At one point, after bumping his bet from \$50 to \$200, he drew a pair of 4s and, ever so timidly, asked the female dealer if, er, he



For travel, an attache case holds David's computer, and specially rigged shoes. In action, David fits snugly in an athletic supporter.



was allowed to split the pair—that is, play each card as an individual hand and double his bet to \$400. "Yeah, sure," the dealer sniffed disdainfully, "but splitting 4s ain't smart."

It was in truth profound, for not only did Taft know the exact number and values of the cards remaining in the deck, he knew that the odds dictated that the dealer was all but predestined to lose. And so, when dealt another 4, he boldly resplit for a total bet of \$600. In response to the dealer's mocking glare, Taft meekly pleaded, "My friend David told me that splitting was a good play."

He was only telling the truth. David, as in David vs. the casino Goliaths, is what Taft calls the space-age microcomputer

and battery pack, each about the size of a deck of cards, that were hidden in pockets sewn into the high-waisted athletic supporter that he was wearing. All along, by using his big toes to manipulate a pair of switches that were connected to the computer by copper wires running down the insides of his pants legs, he had been "inputting" the value of each card as it was dealt. In turn, the computer, whirling through 100,000 calculations a second, "told" Taft the best possible play by means of a tapping device built into the instep of his left shoe.

In this instance, responding with a series of short and long taps similar to the dots and dashes of the Morse code, David directed him to: *naap-naap* (quadruple his bet) and *naap-naap-naap* (split) and *tap* (hit) and *naap* (stand).

True to the law of probabilities—and Taft's adage that "one tap is worth a thousand words"—the dealer, drawing to a 13, pulled a 10 and busted. "Master," she said, showing a stack of \$100 chips at Taft, "you may be dumb, but you sure are lucky." Taft beamed, patted the computer purring warmly against his stomach and gushed, "Gee, wow, I dunno, I just had this gut feeling."

Ken Uston first got that special feeling for the game of blackjack one glimmering afternoon while tooling his MG across the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge. At the time he was a senior vice-president of the Pacific Stock Exchange, and bored—so bored that he traversed the bridge each lunch hour to practice playing blackjack in a run-down bungalow with a team of "counters," professional gamblers who employ a card-counting system that attempts to do mentally what Taft's computer does electronically. It was no idle diversion; after weeks of intense practice, Uston planned to join the team for a full-scale assault on the Eldorado of gambling, Las Vegas.

On the afternoon in question, Uston recalls, "I'd just had a bad morning with the board of governors, done my usual sycophant number and was feeling down. But as I crossed the bridge that after-

noon, I got to thinking about where I'd been and where I was going. And suddenly it hit me. Hey, this is just like *Mission: Impossible*. Six guys plotting to outwit the Vegas biggies at their own game. This could be my chance to bust out of my Brooks Brothers monkey suit!"

That was in 1974. Three months ago Uston strolled into the new Resorts International Hotel Casino in Atlantic City—but not so anyone would notice. As the mastermind of his own team of counters, "Mr. Blackjack" was playing it low profile. Or more precisely, new profile. His beard was sprayed gray, and he was wearing a matching wig, "Coke bottle" glasses and a staid business suit with a Shriner's pin in the lapel, the better to pass himself off as Dr. John Wasserman, a vacationing psychiatrist from Phoenix. "Taking off a casino gets into your blood," says Uston/Wasserman. "But you've got to have a cover act."

Thirteen days later, at 9:45 p.m. on Jan. 30, Uston finished a long round at the Resorts' tables and, weighted down with \$43,000 in chips, went to cash in. At the cashier's cage he was stopped by six casino heavies, one of whom produced a piece of paper from which he read in an icy monotone:

"I represent the landlord of the premises, and I am informing you that you are considered to be a professional card counter and you are not allowed to gamble at any blackjack table in this casino. If you attempt to gamble at a blackjack table, you will be considered a disorderly person and evicted from the casino. If you are evicted and return, I will have you arrested for trespassing. If you refrain from gambling at any blackjack table, you are welcome to participate in any other game offered by the casino."

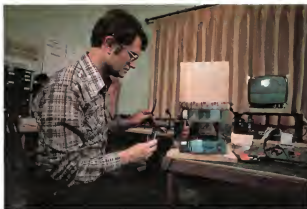
Welcome to Atlantic City.

In all, what Uston calls the Tuesday Night Massacre resulted in the barring of 22 suspected counters. Sweeping as it was, the ban was only the latest stopgap attempt by legalized gambling to ward off a threat that one Las Vegas casino operator says is "by far the most serious

problem facing the industry today."

The issue is wide open. There is nothing illegal about playing a system in blackjack or in any other casino game. On the contrary, for years the gaming Establishment welcomed the practice as the opiate of the eternally gullible. The one

are pending. Last year, responding to charges that Uston was barred by the casinos solely because he "did not lose his money quite as fast as most people," a federal court in Las Vegas dismissed two of his suits on the grounds that the state of Nevada is not obligated to force ca-



Seven working colored lights above the right lens of his glasses helped Ivey determine his bets

thing about a system player, the old casino saying goes, is that he will lose his money systematically.

Now that the axiom has broken down, the casinos are crying "Foul!" and the pro players are bellowing "Revolt!" Several counters have taken legal action on the grounds that the casinos have no more right to bar a skilled player than they have to bar a guest on the basis of sex or religion. Banished more times than even he can count, Uston has sued eight casinos—the Dunes, Sands, Hilton, Flamingo, Marina, MGM Grand, Silver City and Holiday Riverboat—for a total of \$85 million. The Dunes and Sands have settled out of court, and the other cases

sinos to allow card counters to play.

Declaring "I'm on a crusade" Uston has engaged a high-powered legal team and vows to "carry the battle all the way to the Supreme Court, if necessary." There are rumblings that the Federal Trade Commission may take action against the casinos for possible antitrust violations. The American Civil Liberties Union has gotten involved. And a counter's defense fund and national association are being formed to fight on a united front. "The controversy," warns Casino, a gambling trade paper, "may prove to be a fuse slowly burning toward the biggest explosion in the history of legalized gambling."

continued

Like his Nevada counterparts, Steve Norton, a Resorts vice-president, argues that the "law says that the casinos shall include games of chance. But when counters are allowed to play, it becomes a game of skill. There is no luck involved." Shaky at best, that defense is undermined by the traditional image of the casinos as something less than paragons of sportsmanship and fair play. Not above such low tactics as plying high rollers with free booze to ensure that "luck" prevails, the casinos appear to be in a no-win contest with public opinion. "Mr. Uston and his like seem to us to have justice on their side," said *The New York Times* in one typical editorial reaction. "If the casinos do not admit smart players as well as suckers, where's the gamble?"

Not in the Nevada casinos. Their legal out is a suitably fuzzy piece of legislation called Nevada Revised Statute 463.151. In part, it states that casinos "have a duty to keep from their premises persons known to them to be inimical to the interests of the State of Nevada or of licensed gambling or both." In other words, since the state of Nevada is in on the casino action, winning

is "inimical." Or as one pit boss, unencumbered by legalese, interprets the statute, "It's our game and we'll damn well throw out who we please."

Trouble is, most every blackjack player counts cards to some extent. It is in the nature of the game, and many casino officials fear that the publicity about the dragnet for card-counting sharks will scare off the plump little fish who are the staple of the industry. "If I threw out counters," says one casino manager, "I'd throw out 50% of my business."

Admittedly in a bind, casino executives are divided in their opinion of system players. "God bless 'em," says one official who opposes the heave-ho school. "The better the public plays, the more they play and the more we win." Truth be told, as high-risk ventures go, card counting ranks right up there with prospecting for gold in the Everglades. As Uston is the first to point out, "For every one of me, there are probably 99 counters who lose money."

And thousands more who are lured to the game because of books like *One-Third of a Shoe/How To Win*, by Ken Uston. Says Casino, "The gambling busi-

ness should recognize that card counting has created more blackjack players and increased profits all out of proportion. The few players who are of any effect take away very little, but the casinos' greed to get it all may endanger the whole bonanza."

By that measure, even the casinos' most common defense against counters—shuffling early, or "breaking the deck"—has its shortcomings. Because a counter's knowledge of the deck, and hence his potential advantage, increases in proportion to the number of cards that are played, many dealers shuffle at the slightest hint that there is a pro in their midst, sometimes after every hand. But that is dully time-consuming, reduces the desired number of 100 hands an hour by half or more, annoys other customers and violates what one dealer calls the first commandment of the pit: "Thou shalt not prolong the natural transfer of cash from the player to the house."

Regardless, the fast shuffle is so prevalent that the New Jersey Casino Control Commission imposed a pair of new rulings on Jan. 4 that not only thwarted the practice but also precipitated the Tuesday Night Massacre. First, the commission decreed that the dealers had to deal a minimum of two-thirds of the way into the "shoe," a dealing device that holds two or more decks, before shuffling. And second, it directed that dealers could only be changed at the end of their hour-long shifts, thus preventing the practice of arbitrarily switching dealers as a pretext for shuffling.

Word that Atlantic City would be staging the "best game in the world" all but short-circuited the counter grapevine, and Resorts suddenly found itself hosting what amounted to a counters' convention. But from its "eye in the sky," the overhead network of catwalks and closed-circuit TV "close cameras" that look down on the gaming tables through a ceiling of one-way mirrors, the casino's security force was doing some counting of its own. "We had 60 to 75 counters in the month of January," says Norton, "and the effect on our business was substantial."

When Resorts reported the invasion of counters to the gaming commission, Chairman Joseph Lordi allowed that "the commission does not have any standards on the subject at this time. The casino,



The three faces of Ken Uston. When Dr. Weizsacker (left) failed the test, Uston discarded disguises.

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therefore, is free to develop its own standards." Within hours, Uston & Co. were persona non grata and the casino was busily posting signs that read: WE RESERVE THE RIGHT TO EXCLUDE PROFESSIONAL CARD COUNTERS FROM PLAY AT OUR BLACKJACK TABLES. "Basically," countered Uston, "it means, we reserve the right to exclude winners."

In a quandary, the gaming commission scheduled hearings in an attempt to work out a definition of the term "professional counter." They might just as well try for a tidy legal definition of pornography. As Commissioner Albert Merck observes, "We have to balance a lot of things. We want the casinos to make profits, but at the same time I don't think any level of skill should be banned." Citing the example of baseball teams that shift their fences to accommodate the strengths of their hitters, Merck suggests that there might be some way to tinker with the blackjack rules to satisfy all parties concerned.

Adding insult to incursion, throughout the controversy Uston maintained a base camp in Room 1022 at Resorts and, on an electric typewriter provided by the hotel, pounded out lengthy memos to the commission, charging the casino with price gouging, "harassment techniques" and other offenses, such as forcing the crowds of average players to bet above their heads by making "fully 85% of the blackjack tables \$25 minimum."

In his crusader's robes, Uston also pushed for "an open environment in which skillful play is viewed in a positive way rather than being judged as a furtive, even quasi-criminal pursuit." He realized how refreshing it was to play "out in the open," he says, after he failed the Wasserman test. Seems that on Uston's very first day in the casino one of the pit bosses saw through his psychiatrist's guise and let it be known that Mr. Blackjack was in town. No great loss, says Uston. Not only was the "wig too itchy anyway" but the unveiling gave him the chance to play the most thrilling role of all: himself.

If nothing else, the Massacre focused attention on a shadowy subculture, one that gives rise to two key questions: How many professional counters are there, and how much do they win? The counters themselves claim that there are no

more than 50 or so of their number who win serious money with any consistency. But Bob Griffin, president of Griffin Investigations, a detective agency that services 30 casinos and maintains an infamous "black book" of some 1,500 photographic dossiers on cheats and counters, estimates that there are "100 known major-league counters and probably another 100 who are undetected. The ones that get greedy come to our attention. The ones that are content to win \$300 to \$400 a day might go undetected for years."

As for "how much?" Resorts says that in January its blackjack wins were cut in half, or some \$80,000 to \$100,000 a day. How much of that decrease was caused by the postholiday lull and how much by the skills of the counters is indeterminable. However, Uston offers one yardstick; he says that he and his five teammates won \$145,000 in their 13-day fling before the boom was lowered. Unbeknownst to Resorts, two of Uston's confederates escaped detection and played on until the team broke camp on Feb. 22, netting an additional \$30,000. Overall, Uston estimates that counters win up to \$1 million annually in the U.S. For the five years he has been on the circuit, playing in the U.S., the Bahamas, Aruba, Panama, Macao and in the major clubs in Europe, Uston claims that he and the 40 or so top players that he has teamed with have won \$3.4 million.

Even allowing for the penchant of gamblers to exaggerate, the figures are the kind that compel casino spokesmen like Norton, engaging in a little hyperbole of his own, to say, "If counters are allowed to play in Atlantic City, it will be economic suicide." The fact that Resorts has somehow managed to serape along on average daily revenues of \$663,000, or triple the take of the largest Nevada casinos, calls to mind another gambler's maxim: never bet on anything that talks.

Fact is, a gambling fever is upon the land. The gross revenues for all Nevada casinos last year were a record \$1.85 billion, up 21.6% over 1977. And there is no doubt as to the spark for the boom. It's blackjack, which has surpassed craps to become the most popular casino game by a runaway margin. Over the past decade in Nevada, the gross revenues per year from the game have increased from \$117.3 million to \$519.6 million, a

growth of more than 400%. In Reno the number of blackjack tables has tripled to 2,700 in the past decade, and schools and seminars teaching card-counting systems have opened in 10 major cities around the U.S.

The highly addictive appeal of blackjack is that it is the only casino game that can be consistently beaten by strategy. That is because it is not subject to the law of independent trials, a mathematical edict meaning that in games like craps, roulette and keno, one play is unrelated to the next. For example, the odds that a craps shooter will roll a 7 are 1 in 6. And though a shooter might roll seven 7s in a row, the odds that he will do so again on the eighth roll are still 1 in 6, just as they were on each of the seven previous rolls. As they say in the pits, the dice have no memory.

Blackjack hands, however, are very much dependent on what cards have already been played, and the odds for or against the player fluctuate accordingly. Next to aces, no cards are more beneficial to the player than the 10-value cards—jacks, queens, kings and the 10s themselves. Primarily, that is because the rules require the dealer to continue drawing until he has a total of 17 or more. Thus, when the deck is "hot," or rich in 10-value cards, it is to the player's advantage to stand on a "stiff" (any hand totaling 12, 13, 14, 15 or 16) and let the dealer take the risk of drawing one of the 10-value cards and busting. In such instances, the player's advantage over the house can rise to 5% or more.

One of the first to discover, codify and cash in on this statistical windfall was Dr. Edward Thorp, the godfather of counters. In 1961, when he was a 28-year-old math professor at MIT, Thorp used an IBM-704 computer to plumb the mysteries of the 34 million different combinations in which the cards can be dealt. His conclusion: given a bet limit of \$500, the game could be consistently beaten at the rate of \$125 an hour.

Thorp had a far better return when, while field-testing his system in Lake Tahoe, he and one of his two millionaire backers won \$17,000 in one two-hour whirl. And when he revealed all in his 1962 bestseller, *Beat the Dealer*, Thorp became to blackjack what Einstein is to relativity. In no time, his book was the most-requested volume in the Las Vegas

continued

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public library and the casinos were invaded by players clutching the sweat-resistant, palm-size strategy charts that came with *Beat the Dealer*.

The casinos' initial reaction was overkill. They instituted rule changes that restricted various strategy options and significantly increased the house advantage. But so many average players went elsewhere for their kicks that the old rules were soon reinstated. Thereafter the casinos relied more on the fast shuffle and began replacing their single-deck games with four-deck shoes, affectionately known as "perfecker stoppers," on the theory that 208 cards are harder to keep track of than 52. Looking on bemusedly, Perfecker Thorp said, "These new rules show that the casino owners still don't understand the system."

Multideck play is more difficult for counters but only slightly so, since they have replaced memory with a counting system. As a case in point, the fact that

all of Resorts' blackjack games are multideck did not exactly make them immune to a counter attack. More than anything, casinos prefer the multideck shoe because it delivers up to three times as many hands an hour. Player acceptance has been grudging, though, and today about 25% of the blackjack games in the U.S., most of them in the Reno-Tahoe area, are still single-deck.

The common misconception about professional counters is that they have photographic minds and somehow memorize the deck. This was true with one deck, but not with four. There are dozens of system books for sale, most of them beneficial only to their authors, who charge up to \$395 for their "secret formulas." Whatever the exotic name—Aus the Boss, Wong High Low, HI OPT—all are based on the Thorp method of ascribing a plus or minus value to the cards.

In a basic, simplified system, for example, the low cards 2 through 6 are

counted as plus one, the high cards 10 through ace are minus one, and the middle cards 7 through 9 are zero and not counted. Thus, by adding or subtracting the plus or minus value of each card as it is dealt, the system player keeps a "running count." The higher the plus count, the more 10-value cards remain in the deck, and the player increases his bet accordingly. The lower the minus count, the more low cards remain, and he bets the minimum.

Because the player only has to remember one number, the running count, he can do so as easily through four decks as one. Not so easy is developing the speed to keep up with the rapid-fire pace of play. Practice makes perfect in card counting only when the player can keep an accurate running count while flashing through an entire deck in 20 seconds.

Then comes the hard part. What card counters do memorize are strategy charts that take up to 100 or more hours of in-

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tense cramming to master. The best counters practice daily with flash cards, mumbling to themselves. "When do you split a pair of 9s? When the dealer is showing anything from 2 to 9 but not 7."

Q What is your best play if you have a pair of 7s against the dealer's 10?

A. Hit in Las Vegas, stand in the Bahamas and surrender in Atlantic City.

Surrender does not mean the counter should turn himself in to the security guards. It is but one of several house rules that vary widely, and critically affect the counter's strategy. In Atlantic City the player is allowed to fold his hand and forfeit one half of his bet before the dealer checks his own down card to see if he has blackjack. Called early surrender, it is not to be confused with conventional surrender, the five variations on doubling down or the myriad other adjustments the counter must learn to make if he is to avoid going home in a barrel.

Then comes the really hard part—actually playing. Many are the counters who have perfected their systems at home only to turn into blundering idiots when real money is on the line. It takes a unique strain of steely-eyed infighter to survive the pressure, suspicion, fatigue, hostile dealers and, worst of all, inevitable losing streaks. If he does survive—if he does not make the common, fatal mistake of trying to recoup a loss by exceeding the bet limit allowed by his bankroll—then and only then the counter may achieve his goal of turning the 1.5% advantage the house has over the average player into a 1.5% advantage for himself.

Provided, that is, the house is not playing the more profitable, and revengeful, game of fleecing the fleecer. To a man, the counters claim that the casinos are guilty of all manner of dastardly tactics including out-and-out cheating. Of course, such accusations are only that, and make a convenient excuse for losing. And, just as vehemently, the casinos deny that they would risk losing their licenses by doing anything underhand. Still, charges of stacked decks, phantom shuffles, doctored drinks and house "mechanics," or crooked dealers, are so often heard that the cloud lingers. In his book *Your Best Bet*, Mike Goodman, a former Las Vegas casino manager, casually admits that, before a crackdown, some of the Nevada casinos routinely removed 10-value cards from shoes "for years."

The casinos know their quarry's habits: well: intense concentration, darting eyes and—the big tip-off—erratic betting patterns. To compensate, the counters make foolish "cover bets" and engage in more evasive actions than a counterspy. Indeed, for the hooked, the intrigue is part of the high. "Make no mistake, gambling is superexciting," says Taft, a blackjack subculture unto himself.

Born Keith Gustav Seidensticker Jr., Taft remembers little of his father, except to say, "Well, the first time he was in prison had something to do with selling undelivered airplane engines through the mails. The next time was for rum-running." Taft's stepfather, whose surname he assumed, was a math teacher at Cut Bank Junior High, and young Keith was the nightshift kid who was forever building bombs in chem lab and shocking teachers by hot-wiring their classroom doorknobs. He hummed around town in a three-wheel electric car of his own design that featured a toothless exhaust pipe borrowed from a church organ. He also built a stubby-wing airplane with an outboard motor that made it out of the garage and down the driveway but, alas, never got off the ground. "I was a real weirdo," he says.

While attending Concordia College in Moorhead, Minn., Taft designed a blimp in which he planned to circumnavigate the earth. Instead, after graduation, he went back to Montana to teach high school physics and music, and build a prototype of the first snowmobile, a huge, growling, tank-like thing that flattened a neighbor's fence. "I couldn't get it out of reverse gear," he says. Eventually he took an engineering manager's job with Raytheon and in 1967 moved to Sunnyvale, which is 40 miles south of San Francisco in the heart of "Silicon Valley," so called because of the concentration of electronic firms in the area.

Then came the fateful lucky-buck trip to Reno in 1969. More than as a handyman's fling, Taft viewed his secret blackjack project as a "new frontier, a chance to break out of an increasingly partitioned world. Whatever the outcome, I felt I could justify all the work involved by the technical knowledge I would gain. Certainly, making additional money was a strong motivation but only insofar as it

would buy my freedom to become what I've always wanted to be—an inventor. Call it a Walter Mitty dream, but I saw the gambling computer as my bridge to the independent life."

Because he was working under wraps, Taft had to teach himself by using the computer manuals like recipe books. For the better part of two years he spent his weekends and evenings in an upstairs bedroom, testing, plotting graphs and soldering more than 2,000 tiny joints. Training sessions were equally intense. While driving, Taft played license-plate blackjack by wiggling his big toes to record the numbers on passing cars. Family members took turns dealing him more than 10,000 hands at the dining-room table while his daughters played their rock records at full blast to simulate the feel of a casino. One recurring problem: the 10,000 toe movements required for an eight-hour session of play gave him painful calluses. Smiling through, he allows that "the thrill of victory is sometimes tempered by the agony of de-feet."

Taft called his first computer George; it was a kind of Cro-Magnon forebear of David. His initial solution to the problem of reading George's output was as ingenious as it was complex. Working with the precision of a watchmaker, he inserted a row of seven tiny light-emitting diodes into the frame of his black horn-rimmed eyeglasses just above the right lens. The diodes were connected to the computer by a fine wire that was coiled into his hair and ran down the back of his collar. When all the diodes flashed on—stand. When they all flashed off—hit. And so on, through a color-coded series of winking lights that covered the range of betting and playing options.

Finally, in early 1972, Taft was ready to plug all the components together for a shakedown trial. Like some suburban Dr. Frankenstein, he turned on the juice and stood in wonder as his patchwork creation blinked to life and responded perfectly to his every command. "I've never been so thrilled," he says.

But George was a monster, sure enough. At the time, the state of computer art was such that what Taft had envisioned as a light, compact unit turned out to be a 15-pound mass of brass-encased computerware, nickel-cadmium battery packs, switches, lights, cables and wires. Suited up, with the whole rig fit-

continued

ted into an apron and trusted to his upper body by an Ace bandage, he looked like something out of *Star Wars*.

Even so, all systems go, he set out to zap Nevada in a series of weekend forays. Though jittery and limping because of toe fatigue, he went largely unnoticed as he dragged himself through the casinos with the 15 pounds of added bulk pulsing beneath his outsize pea coat. He recalls, "I felt like I was nine months pregnant"—and ready to deliver. According to the meticulous notes he kept, his pulse rate never dropped below 110 while playing.

Not to worry. Blessed with total recall, the magic machine was a born con artist. That is, if a pit boss was zeroing in, it cooled the "heat" by dictating winning plays that were so seemingly foolhardy—stand on a 12 against a 10, hit a hard 18, split a pair of 10s—as to show no discernible pattern other than dumb luck. Moreover, the computer also eased suspicion by freeing Taft for the kind of chat that would shatter the concentration of a counter.

"It's just a fun piece of equipment," says Taft, who once asked it a fun question: How much are you worth? Answer, the computer gives the player a 2.5% advantage over the house, or nearly double the win potential of the professional counter. "And during the shuffle," Taft adds, "it'll do your horoscope."

All Taft's signs were in the ascendancy on his first swing through the casinos. Oh, there was a problem with a battery-acid leak that ate through his shirt and into his chest, but the scar is hardly noticeable. Undaunted, he won \$500 the first weekend, betting in the \$5-to-\$15 range. "And I won the next weekend," he says, tracing his progress on a graph. "and the next weekend and the next and the next, and I said, 'Hey, I got it made.'"

But not on the home front. Taft's notes for the period show another, decidedly negative, trend: "Dorothy upset over my gambling. . . . Dot in pieces again. . . . Dot on verge of nervous breakdown." She explains, "I was fearful of so many things—of losing a lot of money, of the Mafia, and Keith being harmed in some way. But my worst fear was that he would become a compulsive gambler. He was devoting so much time to the computer that

it put a strain on the family. At church I always had to make excuses about where he was, and it was very hard on my nerves. At times the strain was almost unbearable."

Taft attempted to pacify his wife with two lines of reasoning. First, he says, "I, too, consider gambling a vice that leads to the breakdown of society, but I was pursuing it only as a means to a socially redeemable end. Specifically, I want to build industrial robots to free people from drudgery so they can do something more meaningful. In that sense I'm mixing Christianity and blackjack. I'm God's gambler." Secondly, he says, "Gambling implies a chance of losing, and I didn't intend to do that. I was interested in putting in enough hours so that luck didn't count and the statistics would take over. For me, blackjack is not gambling, it's a business." Dorothy, her image of the devil's pasteboards unshaken, replies simply, "It's gambling."

So they struck a bargain. Taft agreed to play until he either won \$10,000 or lost \$4,000. At that stage his record was 12 winning weekends out of 13 and, picking up on the lingo, he decided to "chunk 'em real good"—increase his bet level from \$10 to \$200. He got clobbered instead, losing \$2,600 and \$1,800 over two extended weekends. "Statistically, the odds against my losing that consistently over that period of time were more than a million to 1," says Taft. "So you have to look to an outside force. To me it was clear that God didn't want me to become a millionaire through gambling."

The machine had, in fact, won many more times than it had lost, and if Taft had bet at the \$200 level throughout, he would have netted a tidy sum. "So the computer was a winner," he says, "but God made me a loser." And thus on New Year's Day 1974, the Fastest Toes in the West retired, limping, and peace settled once again upon Silicon Valley.

Like Taft, Uston does not go by his given name. He was born Kenneth Senzo Ustil. His father, a retired Yale language professor, is Japanese-American and his mother is of Austrian extraction. Uston became enamored of mathematics as a boy when he kept his own set of elaborate major league baseball statistics. After Harvard Business School he became a typical statistician himself: married to airline stewardess; three children; split-level in

New London, Conn. Director, Chamber of Commerce, Chairman, United Fund, Vice-President, YMCA.

In 1968, Uston left his job as an economic forecaster for Southern New England Bell and followed one of his population-mobility curves to California, where he served as a financial consultant before joining the Pacific Stock Exchange in 1969. Though upwardly mobile, he wanted to get out from under. "I just couldn't stand the office politics that existed in every place I worked," he says. Divorced in 1973, he sought therapy by playing jazz piano in the manner of Erroll Garner, "my absolute lifetime favorite musical idol." But the squares at the stock exchange harrumphed when he was discovered playing riffs in wee-hour bistros in the financial district. Undignified.

Blackjack was another occasional escape, and it was through a friend that Uston heard about a legendary counter—call him Big Al—who had reputedly won such a bundle at a small casino in Delepe, France that he put the club out of business. Uston found his first meeting with the old pro in the tumble-down house across the Bay Bridge "transcendent." Not only was he impressed by Big Al's drill-sergeant training routines, but he also saw in the marvelous "Big Player" cover scam—about which more later—a role for which he felt predestined.

Uston was rarely without a deck of cards thereafter. He practiced at stoplights, in elevators and behind the locked door of his office while his secretary put the outside world on hold. The transformation, gradual at first, became more pronounced with each succeeding weekend that he joined Big Al's team for raids on the Nevada casinos. Finally, one Friday afternoon when Uston was rushing to catch the next jet to Vegas, his secretary said, "Mr. Uston, you look very funny." Uston recalls, "And suddenly I realized, 85 grand in cash does look kinda, you know."

A kit lumper than the \$42,500 a year he was earning at the exchange, Uston's resignation in 1974 to pursue a "model business" completed the reincarnation and soon the word was around Vegas that a new and awesome superflake was loose in their midst. He had to be seen to be disbelieved. The getup—green patent-leather shoes with three-inch stack heels, iridescent slacks, diamond-studded watch,

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pinkie ring and matching bimbos on each arm—was diverting enough.

But the moves? Saint Vitus preserve us, the moves looked like triple-reverse minuets. His nicknames—the Phantom, the Mad Bomber, the Roadrunner—did not do him justice. Yahooing and knocking back double Scotches-on-the-rocks, he rarely sat down but seemed to carom off the blackjack tables like a pinball, placing a \$1,000 bet here, a \$700 stack of chips there, and then skipping off to play six hands simultaneously while nibbling the neck of a cocktail waitress.

Vegas had seen its share of outrageous high rollers, but this dude was special. He was winning. All the time. Once, in a flashy display of splitting, respinning and doubling down at the Fremont Hotel, the Mad Bomber had 12 hands going at two tables at the same time—and won them all when both dealers busted. Forty-five minutes later—yahoo!—he boogied off with a \$27,600 killing.

Naturally all the casinos were eager to have him on hand when his win streak disintegrated. No potentate was ever more lavishly accommodated. Everything, including \$100-a-night call girls, was complimentary. Caesars Palace offered to jet him and his entourage to and fro in its private 707. In his capacity as Caesars casino executive, Al Rosen, now the president of the New York Yankees, personally attended to his every need. Uston was put up in \$800-a-day suites with white baby grand pianos and private bars stocked with \$35 bottles of Mumm's René Lalou.

But the losing streak never came. And as the weeks and months wore on, the Bomber became the subject of intense scrutiny. Then, in June 1976, a pit boss at the Sands figured out the method to the madness. The scenario: six or so of Big Al's counters would enter a casino separately, take seats at different tables, bet the minimum and try to blend into the background. Enter the Bomber, pretending to booze and whoop it up while in fact he was carefully surveying the counters and waiting for the hand signals that would tell him when the deck was hot. Often several decks heated up at once, and hence the seemingly bizarre dashing about. Far from rash, the Bomber's bets were so deceptively shrewd that for nine months of hit-and-run play, Big Al's team claims to have won \$480,000.

As for the Bomber, or Big Player, as the role is known in the counter's trade, Uston says, "I was only acting out what I really wanted to be—a rich, fun-loving high roller."

Since then Uston has become a student of disguises. He has half a dozen roles, including Billy Williams, a drawling, yippee-yi-yo cowpoke ("Hiya, my friends call me Tex") swaddled in denim and pearl buttons. He also had Mike Westmore, the Hollywood makeup man, build him a false nose and buck teeth for \$500. With the addition of a little tape on the eyes and a lot of cotton in the mouth, Uston turns into a Chinese hit man who "is so ugly that the pit bosses can't bear to look at him."

Uston used his winnings to buy a \$90,000 condominium in the Las Vegas Jockey Club, where he wrote of his exploits in a book titled, natch, *The Big Player*. He also founded the Uston Institute of Blackjack (price for two-day advanced course: \$397), which he hopes will be the "foundation for a whole empire of schools and real estate." In fact, no sooner had he hung out his professor's shingle in 1977 than he had a call from an interested party—Keith Taft.

In the two years since he had consigned George to the used-parts pile, Taft had moved his family into a new ranch home that had enough room off the garage for him to build a longed-for workshop with décor by Rube Goldberg. Most important, thanks to the knowledge he gained by assembling George, Taft had quit his job at Raytheon to become a \$60,000-a-year computer-engineering consultant. Headly with the freedom of it all, Taft began building a single-engine airplane in his garage and took up pistol shooting and soaring. And he bought a Kawasaki motorcycle that, when he took it out for a long test spin one weekend, mysteriously—his wife says diabolically—ended up in Reno.

"Just fooling around," Taft started gambling again, counting mentally and winning \$200 to \$300 on an odd weekend. Yes, he had some moral compunctions, but he prayed for guidance and got "no negative feelings." In effect, he says, "I asked, 'Whither goes it?' and God answered, 'To the Sahara.' And He didn't mean the desert."

Still confounded by his one turn of bad luck in 1974, Taft programmed George to play one million hands of blackjack, the largest sample ever amassed. Night and day for two weeks the computer winked away in Taft's workshop. And when he pored over the reams of results, he discovered that "the vagaries of chance are very wild indeed." The sample showed that a player putting in 30 hours a week could have a losing streak that lasted six months!

Clearly, Taft concluded, the best defense against that kind of wicked turn of fate was the funds and tactics available through team computer play. So he arranged a meeting with Uston and demonstrated his magic machine. Uston allowed that there was only one big question: Would they win \$2 million or \$3 million? Photographs were taken and Uston mounted his print in his scrapbook under the inscription, "These two men will make gambling history!"

It was decided that the toe switches were too difficult to master on a team basis. So Taft and Uston devised an elaborate dodge that called for the Big Player to sit at a blackjack table and work in tandem with a counter who would mingle with interested onlookers. Using a keyboard hidden in his pocket, the counter would feed the cards to a computer bandaged to his thigh along with a radio transmitter and battery pack. The computer would then relay its commands through the transmitter to a receiver built into the heel of the Big Player's left shoe. The receiver in turn would activate a tap-per built into the instep of the shoe. Taft called the new computer, the precursor of David, George II; it was a more svelte if schizoid descendant of George I.

A San Francisco cobbler, sworn to secrecy, was engaged to construct six pairs of the custom-made wedge shoe for \$1,200. Uston agreed to supply the Big Players. But where would the counters come from? Enter the Singing Taft Family, ready, willing and wired. All but Renee, 24, that is, who had "grave moral doubts." And Dorothy, of course.

Jody, 22, Marty, 25, and his wife Rosalee, 25, quit their jobs, and Dana, 20, left his premed studies to join the team. They practiced at home while Dorothy looked on fretfully and Renee searched the Bible for redeeming passages. Then, telling their friends that they were going to build

continued

ODDS COUPLE continued

a cabin at Lake Tahoe, they left for Nevada. "Wealth from gambling quickly disappears," said Renee.

At a team meeting at Lake Tahoe, the Taft clan and the five Big Players who had signed on decided on their code names and rehearsed their special team knock—rap, rap . . . rap!—the computer's way of saying 21, or blackjack. "The secrecy is fun," said Jody. In her diary, she also noted a change in her father, who had grown a beard and tired wearing a racy cowboy hat until everyone laughed him out of it. "I think my father is rather taken in by the Big Player's lifestyle," she wrote. "He has a habit of telling cruder jokes than usual and even swearing occasionally."

In April 19, 1977, five two-man teams fanned out through the Las Vegas casinos, playing off a joint bank of \$50,000. On the very first day, Marty and his partner relieved Harrah's of \$17,600, and the team doubled its bank to \$100,000 in less than a week. During a break, Diana, who whispered "Praise the Lord" every time his partner won, went to visit Renee in Dallas, where she is a music student at the University of Texas. And when he returned he announced that he had seen the ruin of his ways. "Gambling is such a gray area," he says, "but basically you're taking the money from somebody else, and some Christians think that is wrong." He took his \$2,650 share, bought a used car for \$650 and returned to his premed studies.

And none too soon. On May 11 a casino official at Harvey's Club circled Marty with a radio receiver and told him to step into a back room. There, he says, five strong-arm types forcibly stripped him, confiscated his computer and told him, "We're going to bash your brains in with a two-by-four." His playing partner, an attractive young woman, was also detained, but though she was searched and stripped, they could not find her radio equipment. Finally, she says, under threats that they were going to manhandle Marty if she did not cooperate, she showed them the shoe. After being grilled for four hours, Marty and the young woman were turned over to the police, fingerprinted, booked for swindling and buncos steering, and released on \$2,000 bail each.

The computer gear was sent to Washington, D.C. for analysis by FBI technicians, who concluded that it was not a cheating device. Arguing that the team was only making use of information available to all blackjack players, Oscar Goodman, the Tafts' Las Vegas lawyer, says, "There's nothing illegal about using computers. It's no different than the guys who make notations at the roulette wheels on pads provided by the casinos. The computer is merely a more sophisticated method." Harvey's Club and the Nevada gaming commission apparently agreed. Charges were never pressed.

"The bust was my fault," says Uston. "We knew the heat was on but I got greedy." There were compensations: in 22 days of play the Taft-Uston team won—praise the Lord—\$130,000.

The game has since toughened up in every way, as Uston will attest. Last August, after being banned from the Mapes Moneytree in Reno, he exchanged a few words with a security guard in an alley and was punched out, his cheek and temple bones broken. The left side of his face required extensive plastic surgery. Uston is suing Mapes for \$9 million.

Of late, Uston says that when he feels that someone is tailing him, which is often, he races away in a cold sweat. "I keep telling myself, 'Now, they wouldn't bump me off.' But Jimmy Hoffa said that, too. Not long ago I started up my car, heard a funny noise, leaped out and hid behind a pillar."

More often Uston likes to reflect on the positive aspects of his unlikely career—the \$100,000 he earns annually from his \$2 million real-estate holdings, the \$5.6 million movie version of *The Big Player* that will start shooting this fall. "I enjoy being a celebrity," he says. "It just blows me out. I don't know, maybe I'll become a kind of Nick the Greek character for a while. One thing for sure, when this gambling stuff is all over, I'm going to sit down and play jazz piano a la Erroll Garner in some sleepy little jazz joint in San Francisco."

"As for the moment, well, it sure beats drawing charts at the stock exchange. For the first time in my life, I can tell the world to go to hell. And that, my friend, has a value you cannot compute."

Keith Taft strongly agrees, although he would like to gain more freedom by selling a value that does compute. Re-

cently, tucked away in a small San Francisco financial journal called the *Daily Commercial News*, there was this ad:

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"David is so sweet, so slick," says Taft. "that I thought some other people might be interested in it, too. Of course, on moral grounds, I won't make it available to the public, just to professional gamblers who would be playing, regardless."

"With the appearance of this article, I intend to go public, so to speak, and no longer personally involve myself in gambling on a regular basis. It will make my wife happy, and I have other projects I want to pursue. Besides, I doubt that computer gambling is all that unique anymore. Right now, I'll bet there are 17 guys out there who are wired, and they're not talking to anybody."

Surprisingly, one of the secret computer gamblers might be the once-righteous Renee. When last heard from, she was mellowing and had made an interesting conjecture: "Billy Graham says there is nothing in the Bible against gambling." Nor is there anything against a young lady helping to pay her way through college, which Renee figures she might be able to do with a little help from her friend David. Praise the Lord.

Recently, after the family gathered around the living-room piano to sing *Seek Only Thy Perfect Way*, Taft reflected on the future. "One thing I could do," he said, "is build the casinos a computer that could tell them the skills of a blackjack player within minutes."

Even so, he admits that it will probably take something more compelling to pique his interest these days. "Like jumping off a mountain," he suggests. "From the beginning, I knew the computer would provide the kind of challenge I was looking for. But I also realized that when it was over, most everything else would seem dull by comparison."

So what will he be up to in the next several months?

"Well, it's a secret but this much I'll tell you. I still think that blimp will go around the world."

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As I Did It

by ROBERT WINTNER

IN FRANCE A YOUNG AMERICAN CYCLIST ENCOUNTERS A WISE OLD CRAFTSMAN

I traveled to London in the late '60s and bought a motorcycle with the money my mother had given me to keep for an emergency. It was a BSA 650 Lightning Rocket, one of the last of its kind, and though plagued with vibrations, it could go as fast as I wanted to take it. Two carburetors, chrome fenders and a bulbous fuel tank that was chrome on top and fire-engine red on the sides distinguished the Lightning Rocket. Gold starbursts, one on each side of the tank, were on all BSA motorcycles; lightning bolts shot forward from the starbursts, gold flames spurted out behind. I drove it at 140 mph once, something over 6,000 rpm, I would guess.

The sensation of speed, of limitless acceleration, commenced just over 50 and ceased somewhere between 90 and 100. Near 100 you know that helmets don't matter. The predominant feeling is fear—for me the unforgettable image of starbursts and flesh melted into bent steel, like a lumpy fondue.

As the rpm's rise, so does the engine noise, until the overwhelming rush of air at 100 mph makes the experience somehow, perversely, quieter. At that speed, the driver must crouch as low as possible into the fuel tank to avoid creating an air scoop. At 120 the air tingles; at 140 God speaks, or so it seems, and deceleration takes as much careful thought, as much effort, as reaching top speed.

The road from London to Dover passes the castle at Canterbury and the white cliffs, with sea gulls screaming, before reaching the terminal of the Ostend ferry. From Ostend to Paris, trees line the road like sentries. Paris, I discovered, is not a motorcyclist's city.

From Paris to Bordeaux, the countryside is again pastoral, peopled with farmers, truck drivers and barkeeps who know all about coming off the road for a cigarette and a glass of wine to ease the knots at the base of the neck. South of Bordeaux, I saw two men sitting at roadside next to a motorcycle, and I stopped to offer help. "Justa resting," the younger one said. He was an American, riding an old Triumph 650 Thunderbird, the only touring motorcycle Triumph built. Big and black, its fender cowlings curled into running boards, it had saddlebag mounts, a roll bar and a ride like a Cadillac's.

John was from Los Angeles, his older companion, Bruno, was from Rome. "Picked him up hitching," John said.

"Hitch," Bruno said, showing his thumb as he smiled and nodded.

"He doesn't speak English too good," John said, "but he's got French and Spanish." Bruno smiled and nodded again. "We're hauling out of France," John said. "Too expensive." He was right; a dollar changed to five francs then, and five francs bought half a cheese sandwich—except they weren't sold in halves. Roadside wine was less, but still ran two francs a glass. We agreed to ride together to Spain.

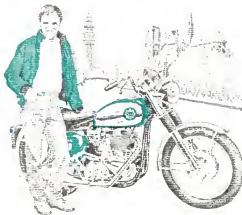
"In Spain, everything is cheaper," Bruno promised, so we all rode fast, long hours. Bruno drove both cycles to spell John and me, and betrayed his secret belief in magic Americans, who are rich in any other man's country even if poor in their own. We laughed when Bruno complained of mos-kweets. He slammered when asked which moto he liked best, shrugged and fidgeted and promised to decide. He said he knew he could go two weeks on nothing but bread and milk, had done it and could again. He spoke little English and had little to say otherwise, except to negotiate for the three of us. His hand waved if pleased with the terms offered, his face scowled if he was angry or insulted. Then he came to John and me to tell us how we had fared, what the price would be for gas, for food, for a place to sleep.

In the south of France sits the town of Biarritz, next to San Sebastian, its little Spanish sister. After two days' hard riding and little eating, we could almost taste the herrings in oil, the horsemeat sandwiches, goat cheese and cheap wine that awaited us across the border. Light headed, we cat-and-moused, throttled down and speeded up, ran figure eights until, 10 miles from Biarritz, my clutch cable broke near the lever. Coasting and kicking into neutral, our little party stopped.

A motorcycle can be driven clutchless if the driver is sensitive to engine sound and can hear when the engine and transmission are ready to take a shift. Even so, shifting is not smooth but must be muscled up and down with an unavoidable crunch of gears. The cable had to be fixed. So we limped into Biarritz, John driving the BSA since he was the far more experienced driver. I drove the Triumph.

We soon discovered that no word in provincial France translates to motorcycle. The word moto encompasses anything with two wheels and an engine.

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from mopeds to Lightning Rockets. Our best prospect, we were told, was a moped fix-it shop somewhere in the back alleys of the town. We found the shop. Its door opened directly onto the street and mopeds poured out like hatching mantises. Tired and hungry, we saw little indication of hope: only dozens of 50-cc mopeds.

But an old man—old but not aged—came to the door inquisitively, nose up to the sound of big motorcycles like a hound scenting game. He was over six feet tall with yellow-white hair and a flushed red face, in the center of which was a great French nose. He wore a once-white jump suit, and his hands looked like cypress knees, gnarled and weather-worn. As he watched us, urthins tumbled out of the shop and swarmed around us and the old man, tottering and touching the big mopeds. Bruno spoke to the old man, and we showed him the limp clutch lever, the broken cable. His brow wrinkled. He scratched, then spoke to Bruno. We heard the word "London"

and were prepared when Bruno gave us the news: the clutch cable was a one-piece part, from the lever to the clutch. The old man had none to fit, but if he called that day to London, a new one would arrive within three weeks.

We hung our heads, mumbled maledictions, and paced in circles. The old man watched, then raised both hands and conveyed to us that we should leave the moto with him overnight, go find a place to sleep. We asked him where we might unroll our sleeping bags, and he directed us to a bluff off a secondary road that overlooked a beach partially sheltered by half-grown bushes and small trees.

"Allez," the old man laughed. "Vite! Vite!" shooing us back from all the urthins who howled when we three mounted the old Thunderbird, burdening her shocks springless, and rode off around the corner. We stopped and bought a big can that was labeled SAUERKRAUT in small letters under a large picture of sauerkraut and sausage. That's for us, we agreed, and bought mustard and bread

and two bottles of wine but drank one on the curb for fortitude before mounting up again.

We made camp and discovered no sausage in the can, so we ate sauerkraut and mustard sandwiches on fresh French bread, drank wine and smoked Gauloises. The sandwiches were memorable, and we drank and smoked ourselves quite free of broken clutch cables and the high cost of France. We awoke in morning mist to find snails slithering across our sleeping bags like cartographers. More sandwiches and wine and cigarettes for breakfast, then into town for coffee.

At nine we arrived at the shop. The BSA sat out front exactly as it had been left. The old man, bright-eyed, ruddy-faced, came out on hearing us and raised both hands as though we were all the best of friends, finally unsteady again. He and Bruno spoke and walked together toward the BSA, hands waving in communication. One hand squeezed the clutch lever to show us it was repaired. Incredulous, I squeezed

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AS I DID IT

it, too, then saw what he had done. Each thread of the cable, maybe 20 strands, had been welded back onto the metal plug from which it had been severed. Delicate as clockwork, the threads were attached so the cable and splice could slide through the eighth-inch cable guide as smoothly as before.

John and I examined and reexamined it. The old man would not look at his work again but walked back into the shop with Bruno. When Bruno called us in, the old man led us to the back of the garage, then even farther back to a part of the shop that was not a garage but rooms for quiet after-hours. The walls were covered with photographs of a man over six feet tall with dark hair and a big nose, wearing a tump suit and standing in front of one motorcycle or another with a trophy in his hands. There were 100 motorcycles in 100 different pictures. Then the old man showed us his trophies, or the few that were left, bent, dented and tarnished.

We walked out front again and asked to settle up. "Cumbien?" I asked.

"Cing francs," he said.

"Cing francs?"

"Oui, oui, oui, oui, oui, Cing francs." A dollar I paid the five francs.

"Merci, Merci beaucoup..."

"Rien!" It is nothing, he insisted. We fished our gear, and I mounted the BSA, turned the key and kicked it over. As the engine revved, the old man tilted his ear down as though to hear what it had to tell him.

The old head was tilted like an unsure but curious pup's. I revved again, dismounted and held a hand up to the old man until he saw me nod. "Oui," he said, nodded and smiled. He stood there watching, listening. "Oui, oui." He mounted, revved and revved, to learn the time between himself and the machine.

He squeezed the clutch lever, not looking at it, found first gear and eased the lever out and the cycle moved slowly up the street. When the engine began to roar, the old man did not hesitate but shifted up to second, roared again and double-clutched into third. He was doing nearly 60 approaching the corner, when he double-clutched back down to second, leaned for the corner until the footpeg scraped the pavement and threw up sparks. Then we could not see him but heard him come out of the turn winding up, shifting, winding up, shifting, winding up and away.

END



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Palm Beach



Yesterday

by MARTIN and HERBERT KAUFMAN

HIGH ABOVE NIAGARA, A FUNAMBULIST COOKED A WELL-BALANCED BREAKFAST

The excitement stirred up in recent years by the singular feats of Evel Knievel is hardly an isolated phenomenon in American history. Derring-do has always drawn eager throngs. In the mid-19th century, for example, the country marveled at the daring stunts of tightrope walkers (then usually called funambulists), the most famous of whom was Jean François Grivelet, also known as the Great Blondin. In 1859, Grivelet, an obscure 35-year-old Frenchman who was about to go on tour with Franconi's Equestrian Troupe, announced that on June 30 he would tightrope 1,100 feet across the gorge of the Niagara River, a mile below the Falls. The news caused an immediate sensation. Rapids whirled directly below Blondin's proposed route, and gamblers began to take bets on whether he would plunge to a watery death. Most of the start money was on the rapids.

When the 30th arrived, a circus atmosphere prevailed as thousands of spectators converged on the scene. By 4:00 p.m., the banks near the site of Blondin's proposed crossing were "fairly black" with people for a mile on each side of the river. At five, a band on the American side signaled Blondin's appearance. He was a dazzling sight, dressed in pink tights and covered with spangles. Taking a firm grip on his balancing pole, he began his walk. Slowly and steadily he went, until, about a third of the way across, to the surprise of the crowd, he sat down on his cable and called for the *Maid of the Mist* to come directly below. When the steamer arrived, Blondin threw down a line and hauled up a bottle of wine. After drinking it, he continued to walk until, reaching the section of the cable that was parallel to the river, he began to run. Finally, while the band played *Home, Sweet Home*, Blondin stepped ashore to the cheers of the Canadian crowd. The walk had taken a bit over 17 minutes, and he was "bathed from head to foot in perspiration."

At six that evening, Blondin began his return trip to the U.S. This time, walking at a much faster pace, he completed the crossing in six minutes. As soon as he was safely on the ground, Blondin announced that he would do an encore on the Fourth of July. An editorial in *The New York Times* urged him to reconsider. The *Times* reminded the Frenchman of "Poe" Sam Patch, who 30 years earlier had survived a daring leap from the Genesee Falls into the "boiling chasm" below. Not satisfied, Patch had announced that he would make the jump again, and before a huge crowd Patch leaped to his death.

Blondin ignored the *Times'* advice, and began to develop even more dangerous stunts. He walked from the U.S. to the Canadian side without his balancing pole. He astounded the crowd by placing over his head a large bag that came down to his knees and had holes only for his arms; then he made his way back to the American shore. On July 15, Blondin walked backward on the cable to Canada, then returned to the U.S. pushing a wheelbarrow, stopping along the way to do a number of handstands, backward somersaults and several swings around the wire. On Aug. 17 he added another twist, he walked across the gorge while carrying his manager, Harry Colcord, on his back. If nothing else, that satisfied those who accused the agent of making all the money while Blondin took all the risks.

In September he put on his most extraordinary performance. With a stove and cooking utensils attached to his back,

he walked to the center of the cable and, after securing his balancing pole, began to cook breakfast. He started a fire, "excited it" with a bellows, then "with all the skill of a *chef de cuisine*," prepared an omelet. When it was finished, Blondin lowered the omelet to the deck of the *Maid of the Mist*, and while the passengers were "eagerly devouring" this unusual meal, he fastened the stove to his back and quickly finished his walk.

With that well-balanced breakfast, Blondin's Niagara exploits came to an end. He had succeeded in all of his "death-defying" stunts and, not incidentally, had accumulated quite a lot of money through collections after each crossing. Though he is best remembered by Americans for his feats of that summer, his career did not end at Niagara Falls. Blondin continued to risk his life on the high wire, almost until his death in 1897, at the age of 73.

Other tightrope walkers, including Blondin's foremost rival, Farini, tried desperately to outdo him. In 1864 Farini decided he would not waste his time trying to walk above the rapids, he would walk through them on a pair of heavy iron stilts. Unfortunately, halfway across, one of the stilts got stuck between two rocks, and he lost his balance and was thrown into the swirling water. Despite an injured leg, Farini fought his way against the swift current and reached the safety of nearby Robinson's Island. To those who enjoyed the antics of 19th-century funambulists, the message was clear: there was only one Blondin, only one "Hero of Niagara Falls." END





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A THE LOVER by Peggy Mach. A white, abstract sculpture of a seated figure, possibly a woman, with a long, flowing dress, mounted on a dark rectangular base.

B PIERRE by Peggy Mach. A white, abstract sculpture of a seated figure, possibly a woman, with a long, flowing dress, mounted on a dark rectangular base.

C IN A MIND by Peggy Mach. A white, abstract sculpture of a seated figure, possibly a woman, with a long, flowing dress, mounted on a dark rectangular base.

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G THE GIFT by Peggy Mach. A white, abstract sculpture of a seated figure, possibly a woman, with a long, flowing dress, mounted on a dark rectangular base.



19TH HOLE THE READERS TAKE OVER

Edited by GAY FLOOD

JOHNSON, BIRD & CO.

Sir:

How appropriate that you started the college basketball season with a cover photograph of an Earvin (Magic) Johnson dunk (Nov. 27). We Michigan State fans knew you would have to end the season with another one (April 2).

BOB STERLING
Shoreview, Minn.

Sir:

Let's hope that next year Magic Johnson won't be in the NBA, so that he will again be able to grace your cover on the NCAA final wearing the green and white of Michigan State.

ROBERT BURGESS
Marquette, Mich.

Sir:

I congratulate Larry Keith for his fine article on the finals of the NCAA tournament (*They Caged the Bird*, April 2). I was glad to see that Terry Donnelly was given his due. I

feel that Donnelly, not Earvin Johnson, deserved the MVP award. Donnelly was 5 for 5 from the field and 5 for 6 from the line—a good night of shooting for anyone.

When Gregory Kiefer got into foul trouble in the second half, Johnson tried to do it all by himself, and Indiana State got back into the game.

I am glad to see that college basketball is still a team sport and not an individual one, as the pros try to make it. As Larry Keith shows in his article, the team will beat the individual almost every time.

WILLIAM D. CORBIN
Belleville, Pa.

Sir:

I was relieved to discover that someone else saw 10 men on the court. It seems the majority of our distinguished American press was unable to detect the presence of others besides Earvin Johnson and Larry Bird.

DEAN M. SANDERSON
Jackson, Mich.

Sir:

Larry Keith says that Michigan State is a "superb team—perhaps even a great one." His assessment of the Spartans' Magic Show is complimentary, yet surprisingly timid. It is hard to imagine anyone hesitating to call this team great. Greatness is determined by performance, and Michigan State's credentials are staggering. The Spartans blitzed through the NCAA tournament like a runaway steamroller, defeating five teams, three from the Top Ten, by a total of 104 points. That's an average victory margin of nearly 21 points. As for their six regular-season losses, five of them came at the buzzer. Very few teams have equaled Michigan State's performance. Those that have, have been considered great. Why not go all the way and add the '79 Spartans to the list?

R. E. NAKFOUR
Lansing, Mich.

Sir:

Adolph Rupp once said that a perfect game

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for a basketball player would be "... 36 points, 18 rebounds and 10 assists." Larry Bird is the first player I have ever seen who came close: 35 points, 16 rebounds and nine assists against DePaul in a game won by two points. I believe I have seen the perfect basketball player.

ARTON N. SMITH
Pleasant Hill, Calif.

Sir:

You broke my heart when you said in your March 26 article *And Finally There Are Four* that Gregory Kieber has been dunking since he was a 5'10" 14-year-old. I'm 14 and 5'10", and I can't even touch the rim!

RON GROCHOLSKI
Kaukaia, Mich.

REBOUND

Sir:

In the April 2 SCORECARD item "Political Basketball," you questioned the whereabouts of Kentucky's two Senators during the debate between Utah and Indiana over which state could claim the greatest support of college basketball.

Since our state's interest in basketball is much greater than that of any other—a fact pointed out by SPORTS ILLUSTRATED—you should certainly understand our reluctance to

use valuable time on the Senate floor simply to restate the obvious.

WALTER D. HILDLESTON
WENDELL H. FORD
Members
United States Senate
Washington, D.C.

STONES' STORY

Sir,

I must commend Dwight Stones and SPORTS ILLUSTRATED for the candid article *This Stones Left None Unturned* (April 23). It brings to light questions that have been in my mind for years. Is it fair that our amateur athletes must compete with foreign "amateur" athletes who are subsidized by their governments for what they do? No! Is it fair that these foreign "amateur" athletes are able to practice their sports day in and day out, while being paid by their governments, when our athletes must practice between whatever jobs they have to hold to make a living? No! And how can the Soviet hockey team be allowed to compete in the Olympics when it is also allowed to play U.S. professional teams for money?

I have always been a great fan of Stones, and Ron Reid's article has not changed that at all. I admire Stones' courage in coming for-

ward as he did. I can only hope that more athletes will follow his lead and do the same. Maybe then the AAU and other amateur sports organizations will realize that suspending Stones and other athletes in his situation is a great injustice. These talented men and women are only doing what they must to survive in the world of "amateur" sports. In Jim Thorpe and Stones, not to mention others, we have lost two great competitors, sportsmen and personalities. It would be a shame to lose any more.

KATHER DAMBERG
Coxsack, Conn.

Sir,

Dwight Stones is one of the best athletes track and field has ever seen, and worth every penny he can get. Besides, can you blame him?

JOHN SASNO
Bristol, Conn.

Sir,

Dwight Stones scooped awfully low in the high jump. It is never a high note to hear that someone failed to toe the mark when others have done so. I remember the Mike Agostini sham reported in SI (*My Take-Home Pay as an Amateur Sprinter*, Jan. 30, 1961). And I still think that the report by Miller and Steele-

continued

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chaser Phil Coleman in support of the simon-pure amateur idea of an Amateur. March 6 1961) was the best and final word on the subject—from SI or anyone else. Coleman concluded: "If Mike Agostini wants to get paid for his sport, I will let him. If the time comes when trout is run on a semiprofessional basis, I'll be relieved that my friends who want to earn money can do it openly without fear of expulsion. I do ask of the Mike Agostinis that they stop implying that because they do something, everybody does, and insisting that because they do it, it's right."

RUD K. MARTIN
Libertyville, Ill.

TWO-SPORT MAN

Sir:

I had forgotten just how successful Gene Conley was in his dual career as a major league pitcher and a center-forward in the NBA until I read Michael Hilton's account (*Doubting His Pleasure*, April 21). And in addition to his athletic ability, Conley displayed a real sense of humor. He was a practical joker without ever hurting anyone in the process. What with inflation, pollution, threats of nuclear disasters and other pressures and problems, we need more people like Conley. A little levity goes a long way these days.

WILLIAM A. MARRAS
Whittier, Calif.

Sir:

One day when I went to Fenway Park last season, someone in the stands hung out a banner that said, WHERE'S GENE CONLEY WHEN WE NEED HIM? Thanks to Michael Hilton for answering the question.

RICHARD WALEGA
New Bedford, Mass.

Sir:

Here is one for trivia fans. Who started at center for Boston on Feb. 27, 1959 at Boston Garden when the Celtics scored the most points ever in an NBA game? Answer, Gene Conley, who subbed for an injured Bill Russell. The Celtics beat the Minneapolis Lakers 173-139.

STEVE ROWENBOM
Wauwatosa, Wis.

Sir:

As a boy who grew up only a few blocks from Connie Mack Stadium, I remember Gene Conley as nothing but a first class guy. He would always stop to sign autographs or to chat with the newspaper boys outside the park. There was one Sunday afternoon I will never forget. "Big Gene" was pitching in relief in the second game of a doubleheader and when his turn came to bat and he took a swing at the ball, his bat broke into several pieces. One piece flew into the stands and hit my friend. After the game Conley showed up at the first-aid station and took my friend home in a cab. How many big-leaguers would do that today?

Even when the Celtics came to Philadelphia to play against the old Philadelphia War-

riors, I would always secretly root for Conley against the home club.

MICHAEL F. TORRES
Pittman, N.J.

Sir:

In the photograph of Gene Conley (a Milwaukee Braves pitcher, who is the batter) I have a bet going with my cleaning lady. She says it's Junior Gilliam of the Dodgers. I think it's Ernie Banks of the Cubs. Who's right? Stakes are high. If she wins, I clean the house next week. If I win, she starts doing windows!

RON BROWN'S HALL

Newman, Ga.

Put away your map, but forget about the windows, too. According to the Sept. 17 1956 issue of LIFE, in which the picture first appeared, the batter is Sandy Amoros of the Dodgers.—ED

KICKS

Sir:

In his preview of the North American Soccer League season (*Not Settling for Hamburger*, March 26), J. D. Reed said that the Cosmos would once again be the champions. He then stated that the rest of the teams would have to catch up to the Cosmos and their multimillion-dollar payroll.

The Vancouver Whitecaps, whose 24-6 record was identical to the Cosmos' last season, had no superstars except for Kevin Hector. And none of the players had million-dollar contracts. Yet Bob Lenarduzzi was named North American Player of the Year.

Reed also mentioned that the Whitecaps had a majority of British players, as if that were a sin. Look at the Cosmos. They have many foreign players on their roster.

The 'Caps have signed their first genuine world-class superstar, Willie Johnson, and now they will go all the way!

ANDRI SHABE
JON FREEDMAN
Vancouver, British Columbia

Sir:

It is obvious that the Cosmos look awesome. But may I remind you that in last year's playoffs the Cosmos lost a game to the Minnesota Kicks 9-2.

I have seen the Cosmos play on a couple of occasions and am an avid follower of NASL soccer. However, I believe that your preview was highly one-sided and that it did not even mention some of the quality players around the league.

FREDERICK WINTER
Lincoln, Neb.

Sir:

Why were the Memphis Rogues so downgraded in J. D. Reed's NASL preview? Reed must still be sore about the 1-0 defeat the Cosmos suffered at the hands of (should I say feet?) of the Rogues last season. A fake victory? No way! Our Rogues are fabulous!

SANDY FREEDMAN
Memphis

Sir:

Your remarks about the Rochester Lancers were uncalled for. If you would stop looking at the Lancers as a thorn in the league's side, you might find out how good a team Rochester has.

JOHN W. REIS
Kent, N.Y.

Sir:

Cosmos or no Cosmos, soccer will never really catch on in North America for one principal reason: The games are too low-scoring. In game after game, the long-suffering soccer fan is expected to settle for the subtleties of ball control and so-called "ducks" between all-too-capable goalies. Though puns will cry foul, I recommend one simple rule change to solve this problem: widen the goal mouth by, say, 12 feet. Soccer in North America would immediately take on new color and flamboyance if 11-8 barn-burners were the order of the day rather than 3-1 jawbreakers.

DANIEL W. SMITH
Fort Dodge, Iowa

GOODSELL & CO.

Sir:

Re your article *Good Show* by Goodsell (April 21), the announcer at the NCAA swimming championships is not the only person who might be accused of displaying an ardent pro-Brian Goodsell bias. Jerry Kerstenbaum elected to devote 20 of his sixty 23 paragraphs to Goodsell while Tennessee's Andy Coat also set two American records and Cal's Graham Smith also won three individual events in addition to winning a leg on a victorious relay team thereby winning one more gold medal than Goodsell. While Goodsell is an awesomely talented athlete and will probably be unbeatable in Moscow, the fortunes of U.S. men's swimming do not rise and fall with his health or malaise. And as evidenced by its fifth-place NCAA finish, neither do UCLA's.

CHEN GUORIN
San Jose, Calif.

MINNESOTA'S TURN

Sir:

Iowa won the NCAA wrestling championship and got two pages of coverage in SI. California won the NCAA swimming championship, which got four pages of coverage. Michigan State won the NCAA basketball championship and got the April 2 cover and four pages. But Herb Brooks' Minnesota Gophers won the NCAA hockey championship and received a mere three lines in FOR THE RECORD (April 2). People in Minnesota are proud of their Gophers' three NCAA hockey championships in the past six years. Ours is a Minnesota-bred all-American team.

HI LO GILLEN
St. Paul

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